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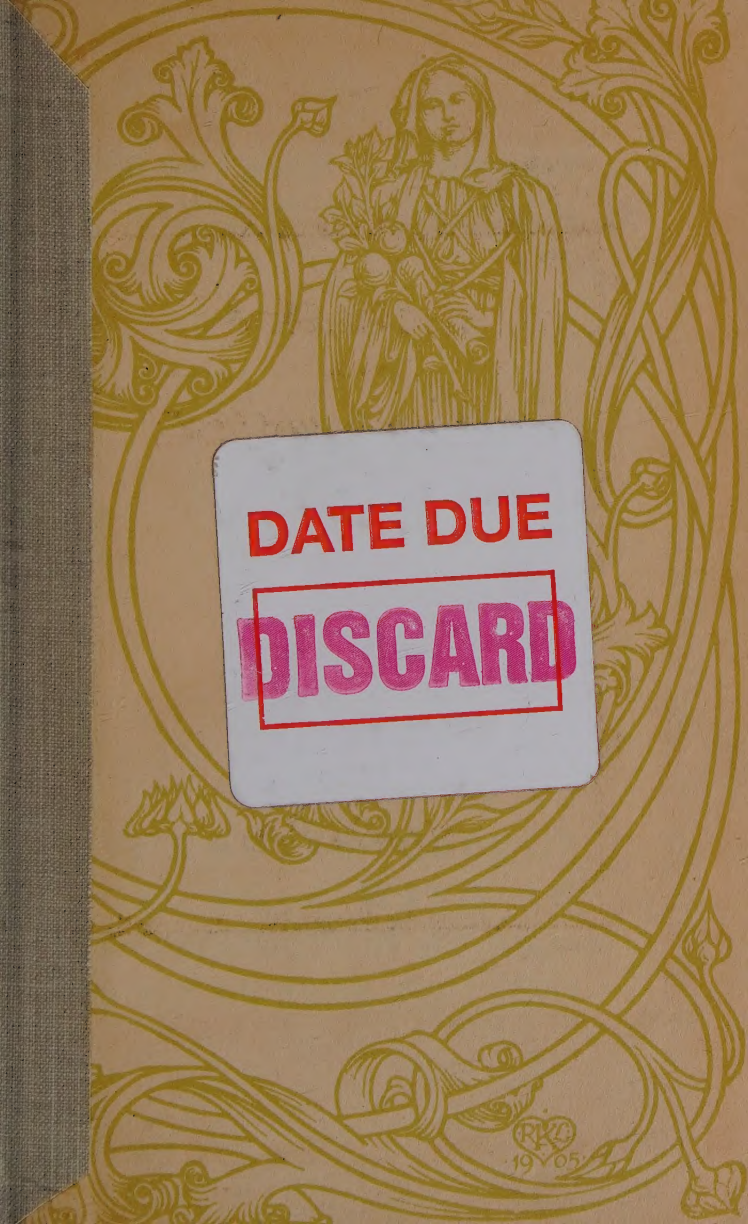

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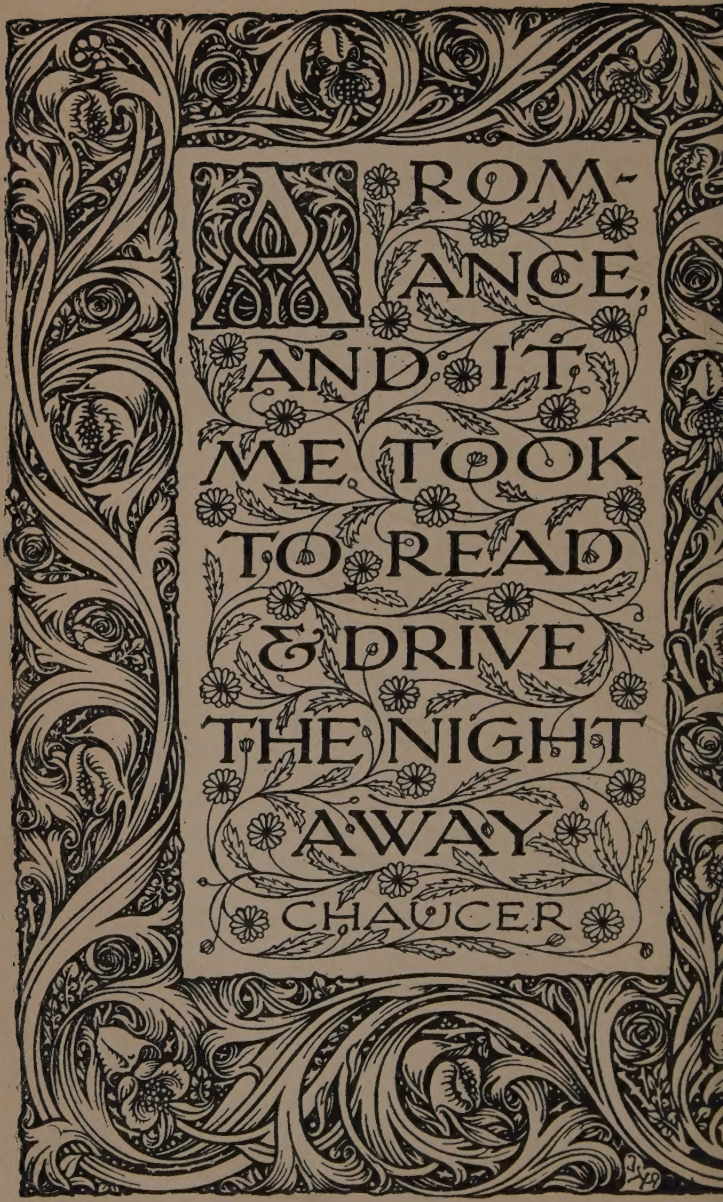
A ROM-
ANCE,
AND IT
ME TOOK
TO READ
& DRIVE
THE NIGHT
AWAY
CHAUCER

THE ADVENTURES of GIL BLAS of SANTILLANE

VOLUME TWO

Le Sage, Alain René.

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THE HISTORY OF GIL BLAS OF SANTILLANE

BOOK THE SEVENTH

CHAPTER I

THE TENDER ATTACHMENT BETWEEN GIL BLAS AND DAME LORENZA SEPHORA

Away went I to Xelva with three thousand ducats under my charge, as an equivalent to Samuel Simon for the amount of his loss. I will have the honesty to own, that my fingers itched as I jogged along, to transfer these funds to my own account, and begin my stewardship in character, since everything in this life depends upon setting out well. There was no risk in preferring instinct to principle: because it was only to ride about the country for five or six days, and come home upon a brisk trot as if I had done my business and made the best of my way. Don Alphonso and his father would never have believed me capable of a breach of trust. Yet, strange to tell, I was proof against so tempting a suggestion: it would scarcely be too much to say, that honour, not the fear of being found out, was the spring of so praiseworthy a decision; and as times go, that is saying a great deal for a lad, whose conscience had been pretty well seasoned by keeping company with a succession of scoundrels. Many people who have not that excuse, but frequent worshipful society, will wonder how such squeamishness should have prevailed over my good sense: treasurers of charities in particular; persons who have the wills of relations in their custody, and do not exactly like the contents; in short, all those whose characters stand higher than their principles, will find food for reflection in my overstrained scrupulosity.

After having made restitution to the merchant, wh little thought ever to have seen one farthing of his pr perty again, I returned to the castle of Leyva. The Cou de Polan had taken his departure, and was far on h journey to Toledo with Julia and Don Ferdinand. I foun my new master more wrapped up than ever in Seraphin his Seraphina equally wrapped up in my master, and Do Cæsar just as much wrapped up as either in the conter plation of the happy couple. My object was to gain th goodwill of this affectionate father, and I succeeded to m wish. The whole house was placed implicitly under m superintendence—nothing was done without my speci direction; the tenants paid their rents into my hands; th disbursements of the family were all under my revisio and the subordinate situations in the household were my disposal without appeal; and yet the power of tyra nizing did not give me the inclination, as it has alwa hitherto done to my equals and superiors. I neith turned away the male servants, because I did not like th cut of their beards, nor the female ones because they ha pened not to like the cut of mine. If they made up to Do Cæsar or his son at once, without currying my favour the channel of all good graces, far from taking umbrage them on that account, I spoke out officiously in the behalf. In other respects, too, the marks of confiden my two masters were incessantly lavishing on me inspire me with a substantial zeal for their service. Their interes was my real object: there was no slight of hand in m ministry; I was such a caterer for the general good, as yo rarely meet with in private families or in political societie

While I was hugging myself on the well-earned pros perity of my condition, love, jealous of my dealings wit fortune, was bent on sharing my gratitude by the add tion of a higher zest. He planted, watered, and ripene in the heart of Dame Lorenza Sephora, Seraphina's conf dential woman, an abundant crop of liking for the happ steward. My Helen, not to sink the fidelity of the historia in the vanity of the man, could not be many months sho of her fiftieth year. But for all that, a look of whole someness, a face none of the ugliest, and two good-lookin eyes of which she knew the efficient use, might make he still pass for a decent bit of amusement in a summer even

g. I could only just have been thankful for a little more
elief to her complexion, since it was precisely the colour of
nalk; but that I attributed to maiden concealments, which
ad eat away all the damask of her cheek.

The lady ogled me for a long time, with ogles that
voured more of passion than of chastity; but instead of
ommuning in the language of the eyes, I made pretence at
rst not to be sensible of my own happiness. Thus did my
allantry appear as if arrayed in its first blushes; a cir-
umstance which was rather tempting than repulsive to
er feelings. Taking it into her head, therefore, that there
as no standing upon dumb eloquence with a young man
ho looked more like a novice than he was, at our very first
terview she declared her sentiments in broad, unequivocal
rms, that I might have no plea for misinterpretation.
ne played her part like an old stager: affected to be over-
helmed with confusion while she was speaking to me;
nd after having said all she wanted to say in a good
udible voice, put her hand before her face, to hide the
uame which was not there, and make me believe that she
as incommoded by the delicacy of her own feelings. There
as no standing such an attack; and though vanity had a
rger share in my surrender than the tender passion, I
d not receive her overtures ungraciously. Nay, more,
presumed to overlook decorum in my vivacity, and acted
ne impatient lover so naturally as to call down a modest
buke upon my freedoms. Lorenza chid my fondness, but
ith so much fondness in her chidings, that while she
rescribed to me the coldness of an anchorite, it was very
vident she would have been miserably disappointed if I
ad taken her prescription. I should have pressed the
fair at once to the natural termination of all such affairs,
the lovely object of my ardent wishes had not been
fraid of giving me a left-handed opinion of her virtue, by
bandoning the works before the siege was regularly formed.
his being so, we parted, but with a promise to meet again:
ephora in the full persuasion that her reluctant re-
stance would stamp her for a vestal in my esteem, and
yself full of the sweet hope that the torments of Tantalus
ould soon be succeeded by an elysium of enjoyment.

My affairs were in this happy train, when one of Don
æsar's under servants brought me such a piece of news, as

gave an ague to my raptures. This lad was one of th inquisitive inmates who apply either an ear or an eye every keyhole in a house. As he paid his court constan to me, and served up some fresh piece of scandal eve day, he came to tell me one morning that he had made pleasant discovery; and that he had no objection to letti me into the fun, on condition that I would not bla because Dame Lorenza Sephora was the theme of the jo and he was afraid of becoming obnoxious to her resentme and revenge. I was too much interested in coming at t story he had to tell, not to swear myself into discreti through thick and thin; but it was necessary that n motive should seem curiosity and not personal concer so that I asked him, with an air of as much indifference I could put on, what was this mighty discovery abo which he made such a piece of work. Lorenza, whisper he, smuggles the surgeon of the village every evening in her apartment: he is a tight vessel, well armed and manne and the pirate generally stays pretty long upon his cruis I do not mean to say, added he, with supercilious ca dour, but that all this may be perfectly innocent on bo sides, but you cannot help admitting, that where a you man does insinuate himself slily into a girl's bedchambe he takes better care of his own pleasure than of her rep tation.

Though this tale gave me as much uneasiness as if I h been verily and romantically in love, I had too much sen to let him know it; but so far stifled my feelings as laugh heartily at a story which struck at the very life all my hopes. But when no witnesses were by, I ma myself full amends for having gulped down my rising indi nation. I blustered and stormed; muttered blessings them the wrong way, and swore outright: but all this wit out coming nearer to a decision on my own conduct. one time, holding Lorenza in utter contempt, it was n good pleasure to give her up altogether, without cond scending so far as to come to any explanation with t coquette. At another time, laying it down as a princip that my honour was concerned in making the surgeon a example to all intriguers, I spirited up my courage to ca him out. Thus dangerous valour prevailed over safe indi ference. At the approach of evening I placed myself in an

ıscade; and sure enough the gentleman did slink into the mple of my Vesta, with a fear of being found out that oke rather unfavourably for the purity of his designs. othing short of this could have kept my rage alive against e chilliness of the night air. I immediately quitted the ecincts of the castle, and posted myself on the high road, ıere the gay deceiver was sure to be intercepted on his ıturn. I waited for him with my fighting spirits on the ll boil: my impatience increased with the lapse of time, l Mars and Bellona seemed to inhabit my frame, and large it beyond human dimensions. At length my tagonist came in sight. I took a few strides, such as lly Mars or Bellona might have taken; but I do not ow how the devil it came to pass, my courage went fur-er off as my body came nearer; my frame was contracted thin somewhat less than its human dimensions, and my art felt exactly like the heart of a coward. The hearts Homer's heroes felt exactly the same, when the das-rdly dogs were not backed by a supernatural drawcansir! short, I was just as much out of my element as ever is was, when he pitted himself against Menelaus in single mbat. I began taking measure of this operator in love, r, and anatomy. He appeared to be large limbed and ll knit, with a sword by his side of a most abominable gth. All this made me consider, that the better part of lour is discretion: nevertheless, whether from the supe-rity of mind over the nervous system in a case of honour, from whatever other cause, though the danger grew ger as the distance diminished, and in spite of nature, ich pleaded obstinately that honour is a mere scutcheon, d can neither set a leg nor take away the grief of a und, I mustered up boldness enough to march forward vards the surgeon sword in hand.

My proceeding seemed to him to be of the drollest. nat is the matter, Signor Gil Blas? exclaimed he. Why this fire and fury? You are in a bantering mood, to all pearance. No, good master shaver, answered I, no h thing; there never was anything more serious since in killed Abel. I am determined to try the experiment, ether as little preparation serves your turn in the field of ttle as in a lady's chamber. Hope not that you will be fered to possess without a rival that heaven of bliss in

which you have been indulging but this moment at
castle. By all the martyrdoms we phlebotomizers h
ever suffered or inflicted! replied the surgeon, setting u
shout of laughter, this is a most whimsical adventure.
heaven is my judge! appearances are very little to be trus
At this put off, fancying that he had no keener stom
for cold iron than myself, I got to be ten times more o
bearing. Teach your parrot to speak better Spanish,
friend, interrupted I; do you think we do not know a ha
from a hernshaw? Imagine not that the simple de
of the fact will settle the business. I see plainly, rep
he, that I shall be obliged to speak out, or some misc
must happen either to you or me. I shall therefore
close a secret to you; though men in our profession can
be too much on the reserve. If Dame Lorenzo sends for
into her apartment under suspicious circumstances, i
only to conceal from the servants the knowledge of
malady. She has an incurable ulcer in her back, wh
I come every evening to dress. This is the real occasio
those visits which disturb your peace. Henceforw
rest assured that you have her all to yourself. But if
are not satisfied with this explanation, and are absolu
bent on a fencing match, you have only to say so; I am
a man to turn my back upon a game at sword play. W
these words in his mouth he drew his long rapier, wh
made my heart jump into my throat, and stood upon
guard. It is enough, said I, putting my sword up agai
its scabbard, I am not a wild beast, to turn a deaf ea
reason: after what you have told me, there is no ca
of enmity between us. Let us shake hands. At this
posal, by which he found out that I was not such a dev
a fellow as he had taken me for, he returned his weapon w
a laugh, met my advances to be reconciled, and we pa
the best friends in the world.

From that time forward Sephora never came into
thoughts but with the most disgusting associations
shunned all the opportunities she gave me of entertai
her in private, and this with so obvious a study, aln
bordering on rudeness, that she could not but notice
Astonished at so sudden a reverse, she was dying to k
the cause, and at length, finding the means of pinning
down to a tête-à-tête, Good Mr Steward, said she, tell

so please you, why you avoid the very sight of me? It
true that I made the first advances; but then you fed the
nsuming fire. Recall to memory, if it is not too great a
vour, the private interview we had together. Then you
re a magazine of combustibles, now you are as frozen as
e north sea. What is the meaning of all this? The
estion was not a little difficult of solution, for a man un-
ustomed to the violence of amorous interrogatories.
ie consequence was, that it puzzled me most confoundedly.
do not precisely recollect the identical lie I told the
ly, but I recollect perfectly that nothing but the truth
uld have affronted her more highly. Sephora, though
her mincing air and modest outside one might have taken
r for a lamb, was a tigress when the savage was roused in
r nature. I did think, said she, darting a glance at me
l of malice and hideousness, I did think to have conferred
ch honour as was never conferred before, on a little scoun-
el like you, by betraying sentiments which the first
ibility in the country would make it their boast to excite.
tly indeed am I punished for having preposterously
vered myself to the level of a dirty, snivelling adven-
rer.

That was pretty well; but she did not stop there: I
ould have come off too cheaply on such terms. Her
y taking a long lease of her tongue, that brawling instru-
ent of discord rung a bob-major of invective, each strain
ore clamorous and confounding than the former. It
rtainly was my duty to have received it all with cool
difference, and to have considered candidly that in
umphing over female reserve, and then not taking pos-
ssion of the conquest, I had committed that sin against
e sex, which would have transformed the most feminine
them into a Sephora. But I was too irritable to bear
use, at which a man of sense in my place would only
ve laughed; and my patience was at length exhausted.
dam, said I, let us not rake into each other's personal
sfortunes. If the first nobility in the country had only
ked at your back, they would have forgotten all your
ner charms, and have boasted but little of the sentiments
ey had excited you to betray. I had no sooner laid in
s home stroke, than the enraged duenna visited me with
e hardest box on the ear that ever yet proceeded from the

delicate fingers of a woman scorned. Such favours mig pall on repetition; so I did not wait for a second, but to shelter in the nimbleness of my legs from the clatter castigation she was going to shower down on me.

I returned thanks to the protecting powers for havi brought me clear off from this unequal encounter, a fancied that I had nothing further to apprehend, since t lady had taken corporal vengeance. It was likely, t that she would be wise and hold her tongue, for the hono of her own back: and, in point of fact, a full fortnight h elapsed without my hearing a word upon the subje The very tingling in my own cheek began to abate, whe was told that Sephora was taken ill. With that forgiven of injuries so natural to me, I was sincerely afflicted at t news. I really felt for the poor lady. I concluded th unable to contend with a passion so ill repaid, that hapl victim of her own tenderness was giving up the ghost. was with exquisite pain that I turned this subject in n thoughts. I was the cruel cause that her heart was brea ing; and my pity at least was the duenna's, though love too wayward to be controlled by advice. But I was mis ably mistaken in her nature. Her tenderness had curdled into acrimonious hatred; and at that very mome was she plotting to be my bane.

One morning while I was with Don Alphonso, th amiable young master of mine was absent, moody, a out of spirits. I inquired respectfully what was t matter. I am vexed to the soul, said he, to find Seraphi weak, unjust, ungrateful. You are not a little surpris at this, added he, remarking the expression of astonis ment with which I heard him; yet nothing is more strict and lamentably true. I know not what reason you ha given Dame Lorenza to be at variance with you; but tr it is, you are become so unbearably hateful to her, that you do not get out of this castle as soon as possible, h death, she says, must be the sure consequence. You ca not but suppose that Seraphina, who knows your valu used all her influence at first against a prejudice which she could not administer without injustice a ingratitude. But though the best of women, she is still woman. Sephora brought her up, and she loves her li a mother. Should her old nurse die shortly, she wou

ncy she had her death to answer for, had she refused her-
lf to any of her whims. For my own part, with all my
fection towards Seraphina, and it is none of the weakest,
will never be guilty of so mean a compliance as to side
th her on this question. Perish our duennas, perish the
nole system of our Spanish vigilance! but never let me
nsent to the banishment of a young man whom I look
on rather as a brother than a servant!

When Don Alphonso had thus expressed his sentiments,
said to him: My good sir, I am born to be the mere
nipping-top of fortune. It had been my hope that she
ould leave off persecuting me when under your roof, where
erything held out to me happy days and an unruffled
e. Now, the part for honour to take is to tear myself
way, whatever hankering I may feel after my continu-
ce. No, no, exclaimed the generous son of Don Cæsar.
ave me to bring Seraphina to a proper view of things.
shall never be said that you are sacrificed to the caprices
a duenna, who, on every occasion, has but too much
fluence over the family. All you will get by it, sir, re-
ied I, will only be to put Seraphina in an ill humour by
posing her wishes. I had much rather withdraw than
n the risk, by a longer abode here, of sowing division
tween a married pair, who are a model of conjugal
icity. Such a consequence of my unhappy quarrel
ould make me miserable for the remainder of my days.

Don Alphonso absolutely forbade me to take any hasty
p; and I found him so determined in the intention of
nding by me, that Lorenza must infallibly have been
own into the background, if I had chosen to have stood
election against her. There were moments when, exas-
rated against the duenna, I was tempted to keep no mea-
res with her; but when I came to consider that to unravel
is surgical mystery would be to plunge a dagger into
e heart of a poor creature, whose curse had been my
tidious prejudice against an ulcerated back, and whom
physical and mental misfortune were conjointly handing
wn to the grave; I lost all feeling but that of compassion
wards her. It was evident, since I was so portentous a
enomenon, that it was my imperious duty to re-estab-
h the tranquillity of the castle by my absence; and that
ty I performed the next morning before daybreak, with-

out taking any leave of my two masters, for fear th should oppose my departure from a misplaced partial towards me. My only notice was to leave behind in r chamber a memorial, containing an exact account of r receipts and disbursements during the time of my stewa ship.

CHAPTER II

WHAT HAPPENED TO GIL BLAS AFTER HIS RETREAT FROM T CASTLE OF LEYVA; SHEWING THAT THOSE WHO A CROSSED IN LOVE ARE NOT ALWAYS THE MOST MISERAB OF MANKIND

I was mounted on a good horse, my own property, a was the bearer of two hundred pistoles, the greater part which arose from the plunder of the vanquished bandi and the forfeiture of Samuel Simon by the Inquisition; Don Alphonso, without requiring me to account for a part of the said forfeiture, had made restitution of t entire sum out of his own funds. Thus, considering r effects, however obtained, as converted into lawful p perty by a sort of vicarious sponsorship, I took them in my good graces without any remorse of conscience. A estate like this rendered it absurd to throw away a thought about the future; and a certain likelihood of doi well, which always hangs about a young man at my a held out an additional security against the caprices of f tune. Besides, Toledo offered me a retreat exactly to r mind. There could not be a doubt but the Count de Pol would take a pleasure in giving a kind reception to one his deliverers, and would insist on his accepting an apa ment in his own house. But I only looked upon this nob man as a very distant resource; and determined, befo laying any tax on his grateful recollection, to spend part my ready cash in travelling over the provinces of Mur and Grenada, which I had a very particular inclination see. With this intention I took the Almanza road, a afterwards, following the route chalked out, travelled fr town to town as far as the city of Grenada, without stu bling on any sinister occurrence. It should seem as fortune, wearied out with the school-girl's tricks she h

ien playing me, was contented at last to leave me as she ınd me. But she still had her skittish designs upon me, will be seen in the sequel.

One of the first persons I met in the streets of Grenada ıs Signor Don Ferdinand de Leyva, son-in-law, as well as ɔn Alphonso, of the Count de Polan. We were both of equally surprised at meeting so far from home. How this, Gil Blas? exclaimed he; to find you in this city! hat the devil brings you hither? Sir, said I, if you are tonished at seeing me in this country, you will be ten nes more so when you shall know why I have quitted the rvice of Signor Don Cæsar and his son. Then I recounted him all that had passed between Sephora and myself, thout garbling the facts in any particular. He laughed ıartily at the recital; then, recovering his gravity, My rend, said he, my mediation is at your service in this air. I will write to my sister-in-law . . . . No, no, sir, errupted I, do not write upon the subject, I beseech you. ilid not quit the castle of Leyva to go back again. You ıy, if you please, make another use of the kindness you ve expressed for me. If any of your friends should be ɔking out for a secretary or a steward, I should be much iliged to you to speak a good word in my favour. I will ke upon me to assure you that you will never be re- ɔached with recommending an improper object. You ve only to command me, answered he: I will do what- er you desire. My business at Grenada is to visit an old nt in an ill state of health. I shall be here three weeks ager, after which I shall set out on my return to my tle of Lorqui, where I have left Julia. That is my dging, added he, shewing me a house about a hundred rds from us. Call upon me in a few days; probably I y by that time have hit upon some eligible appoint- nt.

And, in fact, so it was; for the very first time that we me together again, he said to me: My Lord Archbishop Grenada, my relation and friend, is in want of a young n with some little tinge of literature, who can write a od hand and make fair copies of his manuscripts; for he a great author. He has composed I know not how ny homilies, and still goes on composing more every y, which he delivers to the high edification of his audi-

ence. As you seem to be just the thing for him, I ha
mentioned your name, and he has promised to take y
Go, and make your bow to him as from me; you will jud
by his reception of you, whether my recommendation
been couched in handsome terms.

The situation was, to all appearance, exactly what
should have picked out for myself. That being the ca
with such an arrangement of my air and person as seem
most likely to square with the ideas of a reverend prela
I presented myself one morning before the archbishop.
this were a gorgeous romance, and not a grave history, h
might we introduce a pompous description of the episco
palace, with architectural digressions on the structu
of the building: here would be the place to expatiate
the costliness of the furniture like an upholsterer,
criticise the statues and pictures like a connoisseur; a
the pictures themselves would be nothing to the uninform
reader, without the stories they represent, till univers
history, fabulous and authentic, sacred and profa
should be pressed into the service. But I shall conte
myself with modestly stating, that the royal palace its
is scarcely superior in magnificence.

Throughout the suite of apartments, there was a co
plete mob of ecclesiastics and other officers, consisting
chaplains, ushers, upper and menial servants. Those
them who were laymen were most superbly attired; o
would sooner have taken them for temporal nobility th
for spiritual understrappers. They were as proud as t
devil; and gave themselves intolerably consequential ai
I could not help laughing in my sleeve, when I consider
who and what they were, and how they behaved. Set
beggar on horseback! said I. These gentry are in luck
carry a pack without feeling the drag of it; for surely
they knew they were beasts of burden, they would n
jingle their bells with so high a toss of the head. I ve
tured just to speak to a grave and portly personage w
stood sentinel at the door of the archbishop's closet, to tu
it upon its hinges as occasion might require. I asked h
civilly if there was no possibility of speaking with my lo
archbishop. Stop a little, said he, with a supercilio
demeanour and repulsive tone: his grace will shortly co
forth, to go and hear mass: you may snatch an audien

or a moment as he passes on. I answered not a single yllable. Patience was all I had for it; and it even seemed dvisable to try and enter into conversation with some of he jacks in office: but they began conning me over from he sole of my foot to the crown of my head, without con-escending to favour me with a single interjection; after which they winked at one another, whispered, and looked ut at the corners of their eyes, in derision of the liberty I ad assumed, by intruding upon their select society.

I felt more fool that I did so, quite out of countenance at uch cavalier treatment from a knot of state footmen. My onfusion was but beginning to subside, when the closet oor opened. The archbishop made his appearance. A rofound silence immediately ensued among his officers, who quitted at once their insolent behaviour, to adopt a nore respectful style before their master. That prelate as in his sixty-ninth year, formed nearly on the model of ny uncle, Gil Perez the canon, which is as much as to say, s broad as he was long. But the highest dignitaries mould always be the most amply gifted; accordingly his gs bowed inwards to the very extremity of the graceful urve, and his bald head retained but a single lock behind: o that he was obliged to ensconce his pericranium in a me woollen cap with long ears. In spite of all this, I spied the man of quality in his deportment, doubtless, ecause I knew that he actually happened to be one. We ommon fellows, the fungous growth of the human dung-ill, look up to great lords with a facility of being over-wed, which often furnishes them with a Benjamin's mess f importance, when nature has denied even the most scanty nd trivial gifts.

The archbishop moved towards me in a minuet step, nd kindly inquired what I wanted. I told him I was the oung man about whom Signor Don Ferdinand de Leyva ad spoken to him. He did not give me a moment to go n with my story. Ah! is it you, exclaimed he, is it you whom so fine a character has been given me? I take ou into my service at once; you are a mine of literary ility to me. You have only to take up your abode here. alking thus condescendingly, he supported himself etween two ushers, and moved onwards after having iven audience to some of his clergy, who had ecclesias-

tical business to communicate. He was scarcely out of th room, when the same officers who had turned upon the heel, were now cap in hand to court my conversation. He the rascals are, pressing round me, currying favour, an expressing their sincere joy at seeing me become as it wer an heirloom of the archbishopric. They had heard wha their master had said, and were dying with anxiety t know on what footing I was to be about him; but I ha the ill nature not to satisfy their curiosity, in revenge fo their contempt.

My lord archbishop was not long before he returned He took me with him into his closet for a little private con ference. I could not but suppose that he meant to fathom the depth of my understanding. I was accordingly on m guard, and prepared to measure out my words mo methodically. He questioned me first in the classics. M answers were not amiss; he was convinced that I ha more than a schoolboy's acquaintance with the Greek an Latin writers. He examined me next in logic; nor coul I but suppose that he would examine me in logic. H found me strong enough there. Your education, said h with some degree of surprise, has not been neglected. No let us see your hand-writing. I took a blank piece of pape out of my pocket, which I had brought for the purpos My ghostly father was not displeased with my performanc I am very well satisfied with the mechanical part of you qualifications, exclaimed he, and still more so with th powers of your mind. I shall thank my nephew, Do Ferdinand, most heartily, for having sent me so fine a lad it is absolutely a gift from above.

We were interrupted by some of the neighbouring gentry, who were come to dine with the archbishop. I le them together, and withdrew to the second table, whe the whole household, with one consent, insisted on givin me the upper hand. Dinner is a busy time at an episcop ordinary; and yet we snatched a moment to make ou observations on each other. What a mortified proprie was painted on the outside of the clergy? They had a the look of a deputation from a better world: strange t think how place and circumstance impose on the delude sense of men! It never once came into my thoughts th all this sanctity might possibly be a false coin; just as

there could be nothing but what appertained to the kingdom above, among the successors of the apostles on earth.

I was seated by the side of an old valet-de-chambre, by name Melchior de la Ronda. He took care to help me to all the nice bits. His attentions were not lost upon me, and my good manners quite enraptured him. My worthy sir, said he, in a low voice after dinner, I should like to have a little private talk with you. At the same time he led the way to a part of the palace where we could not be overheard, and there addressed me as follows: My son, from the very first instant that I saw you, I felt a certain prepossession in your favour. Of this I will give you a certain proof, by communicating in confidence what will be of great service to you. You are here in a family where true believers and painted hypocrites are playing at cross purposes against each other. It would take an antediluvian age to feel the ground under your feet. I will spare so long and so disgusting a study, by letting you into the characters on both sides. After this, if you do not play your cards, it is your own fault.

I shall begin with his grace. He is a very pious prelate, employed without ceasing in the instruction of the people, whom he brings back to virtue, like sheep gone astray, by sermons full of excellent morality, and written by himself. He has retired from court these twenty years, to watch over his flock with the zeal of an affectionate pastor. He is a very learned person, and a very impressive declaimer: his whole delight is in preaching, and his congregation take care he should know that their whole delight is in hearing him. There may possibly be some little leaven of vanity in all this heavenly-mindedness; but, besides that it is not for human fallibility to search the heart, it would ill become me to rake into the faults of a person whose bread I eat. Were it decent to lay my finger on anything unbecoming in my master, I should discommend his starchness. Instead of exercising forbearance towards frail churchmen, he visits every peccadillo, as if it were a heinous offence. Above all, he prosecutes those with the utmost rigour of the spiritual court, who, wrapping themselves up in their innocence, appeal to the canons for their justification, in bar of his despotic authority. There is besides another awkward trait in his character,

common to him with many other people of high rank. Though he is very fond of the people about him, he pays not the least attention to their services, but lets them sink into years without a moment's thought about securing their any provision. If at any time he makes them any little presents, they may thank the goodness of some one who shall have spoken up in their behalf: he would never have his wits enough about him to do the slightest thing for them as a volunteer.

This is just what the old valet-de-chambre told me of his master. Next, he let me into what he thought of the clergymen with whom we had dined. His portraits might be likenesses; but they were too hard-featured to be owned by the originals. It must be admitted, however, that he did not represent them as honest men, but only as very scandalous priests. Nevertheless, he made some exceptions, and was as loud in their praises as in his censure of the others. I was no longer at any loss how to play my part so as to put myself on an equal footing with these gentry. That very evening, at supper, I took a leaf out of their book, and arrayed myself in the convenient vesture of a wise and prudent outside. A clothing of humility and sanctification costs nothing. Indeed it offers such a premium to the wearer, that we are not to wonder if the world abounds in a description of people called hypocrites.

CHAPTER III

GIL BLAS BECOMES THE ARCHBISHOP'S FAVOURITE, AND THE CHANNEL OF ALL HIS FAVOURS

I HAD been after dinner to get together my baggage, and take my horse from the inn where I had put up, and afterwards returned to supper at the archbishop's palace, where a neatly furnished room was got ready for me, and such a bed as was more likely to pamper than to mortify the flesh. The day following, his grace sent for me quite as soon as I was ready to go to him. It was to give me a homily to transcribe. He made a point of having it copied with all possible accuracy. It was done to please him; for I omitted neither accent, nor comma, nor the minutest tittle of all he

ad marked down. His satisfaction at observing this was eightened by its being unexpected. Eternal Father! xclaimed he in a holy rapture, when he had glanced his ye over all the folios of my copy, was ever anything seen correct? You are too good a transcriber not to have me little smattering of the grammarian. Now tell me ith the freedom of a friend: in writing it over, have you een struck with nothing that grated upon your feelings? ome little careless idiom, or some word used in an improper sense? Oh! may it please your grace, answered with a modest air, it is not for me, with my confined ducation and coarse taste, to aim at making critical emarks. And though ever so well qualified, I am satisfied hat your grace's works would come out pure from the ssay. The successor of the apostles smiled at my answer. le made no observation on it; but it was easy to see, rough all his piety, that he was an arrant author at the ottom: there is something in that dye, that not heaven self can wash out.

I seemed to have purchased the fee-simple of his good races by my flattery. Day after day did I get a step furher in his esteem; and Don Ferdinand, who came to see im very often, told me my footing was so firm, that there ould not be a doubt but my fortune was made. Of this y master himself gave me a proof some little time afterards: and the occasion was as follows: One evening in his loset he rehearsed before me, with appropriate emphasis nd action, a homily which he was to deliver the next day the cathedral. He did not content himself with asking e what I thought of it in the gross, but insisted on my lling him what passages struck me most. I had the good rtune to pick out those which were nearest to his own aste, his favourite common-places. Thus, as luck would ave it, I passed in his estimation for a man who had quick and natural relish of the real and less obvious eauties in a work. This, indeed, exclaimed he, is what ou may call having discernment and feeling in perfection! Vell, well, my friend, it cannot be said of you,

Bæotum in crasso jurares aëre natum.

a word, he was so highly pleased with me, as to add in tone of extraordinary emotion—Never mind, Gil Blas!

henceforward take no care about hereafter; I shall mak
it my business to place you among the favoured children
my bounty. You have my best wishes; and to prove to yo
that you have them, I shall take you into my inmost con
fidence.

These words were no sooner out of his mouth, than
fell at his grace's feet, quite overwhelmed with gratitud
I embraced his elliptical legs with almost pagan idolatry
and considered myself as a man on the high road to a ver
handsome fortune. Yes, my child, resumed the arch
bishop, whose speech had been cut short by the rapidit
of my prostration, I mean to make you the receiver
general of all my inmost ruminations. Hearken atten
tively to what I am going to say. I have a great pleasur
in preaching. The Lord sheds a blessing on my homilies
they sink deep into the hearts of sinners; set up a glass i
which vice sees its own image, and bring back many fro
the paths of error into the high road of repentance. Wha
a heavenly sight, when a miser, scared at the hideous pic
ture drawn by my eloquence of his avarice, opens hi
coffers to the poor and needy, and dispenses the accumu
lated store with a liberal hand! The voluptuary, too,
snatched from the pleasures of the table; ambition flies a
my command to the wholesome discipline of the monasti
cell; while female frailty, tottering on the brink of ruin
with one ear open to the siren voice of the seducer, and th
other to my saintly correctives, is restored to domestic happ
ness and the approving smile of heaven, by the timely warn
ings of the pulpit. These miraculous conversions, whic
happen almost every Sunday, ought of themselves to goa
me on in the career of saving souls. Nevertheless, to con
ceal no part of my weakness from my monitor, there i
another reward on which my heart is intent, a reward whic
the seraphic scrupulousness of my virtue to little purpos
condemns as too carnal; a literary reputation for a sub
lime and elegant style. The honour of being handed dow
to posterity as a perfect pulpit orator has its irresistibl
attractions. My compositions are generally thought to b
equally powerful and persuasive; but I could wish of a
things to steer clear of the rock on which good author
split, who are too long before the public, and to retire fro
professonal life with my reputation in undiminished lustre

To this end, my dear Gil Blas, continued the prelate, there is one thing requisite from your zeal and friendship. Whenever it shall strike you that my pen begins to contract, as it were, the ossification of old age, whenever you see my genius in its climacteric, do not fail to give me a hint. There is no trusting to one's self in such a case; pride and conceit were the original sin of man. The probe of criticism must be intrusted to an impartial stander-by, of fine talents and unshaken probity. Both those requisites centre in you: you are my choice, and I give myself up to your direction. Heaven be praised, my lord, said I, there is no need to trouble yourself with any such thoughts yet. Besides, an understanding of your grace's mould and calibre will last out double the time of a common genius; or to speak with more certainty and truth, it will never be the worse for wear, if you live to the age of Methusalem. I consider you as a second Cardinal Ximenes, whose powers, superior to decay, instead of flagging with years, seemed to derive new vigour from their approximation with the heavenly regions. No flattery, my friend! interrupted he. I know myself to be in danger of failing all at once. At my age one begins to be sensible of infirmities, and those of the body communicate with the mind. I repeat it to you, Gil Blas, as soon as you shall be of opinion that my head is not so clear as usual, give me warning of it instantly. Do not be afraid of offending by frankness and sincerity, to put me in mind of my own frailty will be the strongest proof of your affection for me. Besides, your very interest is concerned in it, for if it should, by any spite of chance towards you, come to my ears that the people say in town, 'His grace's sermons produce no longer their accustomed impression, it is time for him to abandon his pulpit to younger candidates," I do assure you most seriously and solemnly, you will not only lose my friendship, but the provision for life that I have promised you. Such will be the result of your silly tampering with truth.

Here my patron left off to wait for my answer, which was an echo of his speech, and a promise of obeying him in all things. From that moment there were no secrets from me; I became the prime favourite. All the household, except Melchior de la Ronda, looked at me with an eye of envy. It was curious to observe the manner in

which the whole establishment, from the highest to th lowest, thought it necessary to demean themselves t wards his grace's confidential secretary; there was n meanness to which they would not stoop to curry favou with me; I could scarely believe they were Spaniards. left no stone unturned to be of service to them, withou being taken in by their interested assiduities. My lor archbishop, at my entreaty, took them by the hand. H got a company for one, and fitted him out so as to make handsome figure in the army. Another he sent to Mexic with a considerable appointment which he procured him and I obtained a good slice of his bounty for my friend Me chior. It was evident from these facts, that if the prelat was not particularly active in good works, at least h rarely gave a churlish refusal, when any one had th courage to importune him for his benevolence.

But what I did for a priest seems to deserve being notice more at large. One day a certain licentiate, by nam Lewis Garcias, a well-looking man still in the prime of lif was presented to me by our steward, who said—Signor G Blas, in this honest ecclesiastic you behold one of m best friends. He was formerly chaplain to a nunnery Scandal has taken a few liberties with his chastity. Mal cious stories have been trumped up to hurt him in m lord archbishop's opinion, who has suspended him, an unfortunately is so strongly prejudiced by his enemies, a to be deaf to any petition in his favour. In vain have w interested the first people in Grenada to get him re-estab lished; our master will not hear of it.

These first people in Grenada, said I, have gone th wrong way to work. It would have been much better if n interest at all had been made for the reverend licentiate People have only done him a mischief by endeavouring t serve him. I know my lord archbishop thoroughly entreaties and importunate recommendations do bu aggravate the ill condition of a clergyman who lies unde his displeasure: it is but a very short time ago since I hear him mutter the following sentiment to himself. Th more persons a priest, who has been guilty of any miscon duct, engages to speak to me in his behalf, the more widel is the scandal of the church disseminated, and the mor severe is my treatment of the offender. That is ver

Unlucky, replied the steward; and my friend would be put to his last shifts if he did not write a good hand. But, happily, he has the pen of a ready scribe, and keeps his head above water by the exercise of that talent. I was curious to see whether this boasted handwriting was so much better than my own. The licentiate, who had a specimen in his pocket, shewed me a sheet which I admired very much: it had all the regularity of a writing-master's copy. In looking over this model of penmanship, an idea occurred to me. I begged Garcia to leave this paper in my hands, saying, that I might be able to do something with it which should turn out to his advantage; that I could not explain myself at that moment, but would tell him more the next day. The licentiate, to whom the steward had evidently talked big about my capacity to serve him, withdrew in as good spirits as if he had already been restored to his functions.

I was in earnest in my endeavour that he should be so, and lost no time in setting to work. Happening to be alone with the archbishop, I produced the specimen. My patron was delighted with it. Seizing on this favourable opportunity, May it please your grace, said I, since you are determined not to put your homilies to the press, I should very much like them at least to be transcribed in this masterly manner.

I am very well satisfied with your performance, answered the prelate, but yet I own that it would be a pleasant thing enough to have a copy of my works in that hand. Your grace, replied I, has only to signify your wishes. The man who copies so well is a licentiate of my acquaintance. It will give him so much the more pleasure to gratify you, as it may be the means of interesting your goodness to extricate him from the melancholy situation to which he has the misfortune at present to be reduced.

The prelate could not do otherwise than inquire the name of this licentiate. I told him it was Lewis Garcias. He is in despair at having drawn down your censure upon him. What Garcias, interrupted he, if I am not mistaken, was chaplain in a convent of nuns, and has been brought into the ecclesiastical court as a delinquent. I recollect some very heavy charges which have been sent me against him. His morals are not the most exemplary. May it please

your grace, interrupted I in my turn, it is not for me
justify him in all points; but I know that he has enemi
He maintains that the authors of the informations you ha
received are more bent on doing him an ill office than
vindicating the purity of religion. That very possib
may be the case, replied the archbishop; there are a gre
many firebrands in the world. Besides, though we shou
take it for granted that his conduct has not always be
above suspicion, he may have repented of his sins; in sho
the mercies of heaven are infinite, however heinous o
transgressions. Bring that licentiate before me, I take
his suspension.

Thus it is that men of the most austere character desce
from their altitudes, when interest or a favourite whi
reduces them to the level of the frail. The archbish
granted, without a struggle, to the empty vanity of havi
his works well copied, what he had refused to the mo
respectable applications. I carried the news with
possible expedition to the steward, who communicated it
his friend Garcias. That licentiate, on the following da
came to return me thanks commensurate with the favo
obtained. I presented him to my master, who content
himself with giving him a slight reprimand, and put t
homilies into his hand, to copy them out fair. Garci
performed the task so satisfactorily, that he was reinstated
the cure of souls, and was afterwards preferred to the livi
of Gabia, a large market town in the neighbourhood
Grenada.

CHAPTER IV

THE ARCHBISHOP IS AFFLICTED WITH A STROKE OF AP
PLEXY. HOW GIL BLAS GETS INTO A DILEMMA, AN
HOW HE GETS OUT

WHILE I was thus rendering myself a blessing first
one and then to the other, Don Ferdinand de Leyva w
making his arrangements for leaving Grenada. I called
that nobleman before his departure, to thank him on
more for the advantageous post he had procured me. M
expressions of satisfaction were so lively, that he said—M
dear Gil Blas, I am delighted to find you in such good h

our with my uncle the archbishop. I am absolutely in ve with him, answered I. His goodness to me has been ch as I can never sufficiently acknowledge. Less than my esent happiness could never have made me amends for ing at so great a distance from Don Cæsar and his son. am persuaded, replied he, that they are both of them ually chagrined at having lost you. But possibly you e not separated for ever; fortune may some day bring u together again. I could not hear such an idea started thout being moved by it. My sighs would find vent; and elt at that moment so strong an affection for Don Alphon-, that I could willingly have turned my back on the arch-shop and all the fine prospects that were opening to me, d have gone back to the castle of Leyva, had but a morti-ation taken place in the back of the scarecrow which had ghtened me away. Don Ferdinand was not insensible to e emotions that agitated me, and felt himself so much bliged by them, that he took his leave with the assurance the whole family always taking an anxious interest in my ete.

Two months after this worthy gentleman had left us, in e luxuriant harvest of my highest favour, a lowering orm came suddenly over the episcopal palace; the arch-shop had a stroke of apoplexy. By dint of immediate plications and good nursing, in a few days there was no dily appearance of disease remaining. But his reverend tellects did not so easily recover from their lethargy. I uld not help observing it to myself in the very first dis-urse that he composed. Yet there was not such a wide p between the merits of the present and the former ones, to warrant the inference that the sun of oratory was any degrees advanced in its post-meridian course. A cond homily was worth waiting for; because that would early determine the line of my conduct. Alas, and well-day! when that second homily came, it was a knock-wn argument. Sometimes the good prelate moved for-ard, and sometimes he moved backwards; sometimes he ounted up into the garret, and sometimes dipped down to the cellar. It was a composition of more sound an meaning, something like a superannuated school-aster's theme, when he attempts to give his boys more nse than he possesses of his own, or like a capuchin's ser-

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mon, which only scatters a few artificial flowers of paltr
rhetoric over a barren desert of doctrine.

I was not the only person whom the alteration struc
The audience at large, when he delivered it, as if they to
had been pledged to watch the advances of dotage, said t
one another in a whisper all round the church—Here is
sermon, with symptoms of apoplexy in every paragrap
Come, my good Coryphæus of the public taste in homilie
said I then to myself, prepare to do your office. You se
that my lord archbishop is going very fast—you ought t
warn him of it, not only as his bosom friend, on whos
sincerity he relies, but lest some blunt fellow should ant
cipate you, and bolt out the truth in an offensive manne
In that case you know the consequence; you would be struc
out of his will, where no doubt you have a more co
vertible bequest than the licentiate Sedillo's library.

But as reason, like Janus, looks at things with two face
I began to consider the other side of the question; the hi
seemed difficult to wrap up so as to make it palatabl
Authors in general are stark mad on the subject of thei
own works, and such an author might be more testy tha
the common herd of the irritable race: but that suspicio
seemed illiberal on my part, for it was impossible that m
freedom should be taken amiss, when it had been force
upon me by so positive an injunction. Add to this, that
reckoned upon handling the subject skilfully, and cram
ming discretion down his throat like a high-seasone
epicurean dish. After all my pro and con, finding that
risked more by keeping silence than by breaking it,
determined to venture on the delicate duty of speaking m
mind.

Now there was but one difficulty; a difficulty indeed
how to open the business. Luckily the orator himself ex
tricated me from that embarrassment, by asking wha
they said of him in the world at large, and whether peopl
were tolerably well pleased with his last discourse. I ans
wered that there could be but one opinion about his homi
lies; but that it should seem as if the last had not quit
struck home to the hearts of the audience, like those whic
had gone before. Do you really mean what you say, m
friend? replied he, with a sort of wriggling surprise. The
my congregation are more in the temper of Aristarchus tha

Longinus! No, may it please your grace, rejoined I, quite the contrary. Performances of that order are above the reach of vulgar criticism: there is not a soul but expects to be saved by their influence. Nevertheless, since you have made it my duty to be sincere and unreserved, I shall take the liberty of just stating that your last discourse is not written with quite the overpowering eloquence and conclusive argument of your former ones. Does not your grace feel just as I do on the subject?

This ignorant and stupid frankness of mine completely blanched my master's cheek; but he forced a fretful smile, and said—Then, good Master Gil Blas, that piece does not exactly hit your fancy? I did not mean to say that, your grace, interrupted I, looking very foolish. It is very far superior to what any one else could produce, though a little below par with respect to your own works in general. I know what you mean, replied he. You think I am going down hill, do not you? Out with it at once. It is your opinion that it is time for me to think of retiring? I should never have had the presumption, said I, to deliver myself with so little reserve, if it had not been your grace's express command. I act in entire obedience to your grace's orders; and I most obsequiously implore your grace not to take offence at my boldness. I were unfit to live in a Christian land! interrupted he, with stammering impatience; I were unfit to live in a Christian land if I liked you the less for such a Christian virtue as sincerity. A man who does not love sincerity sets his face against the distinguishing mark between a friend and a flatterer. I should have given you infinite credit for speaking what you thought, if you had thought anything that deserved to be spoken. I have been merely taken in by your outside show of cleverness, without any solid foundation of sober judgment!

Though completely unhorsed, and at the enemy's mercy, I wanted to make terms of decent capitulation, and to go unmolested into winter quarters: but let those who think to appease an exasperated author, and especially an author whose ear has been long attuned to the music of his own praises, take warning by my fate. Let us talk no more on the subject, my very young friend, said he. You are as yet scarcely in the rudiments of good taste, and utterly incompetent to distinguish between gold and tinsel. You are yet

to learn that I never in all my life composed a finer homi than that unfortunate one which had not the honour of yo approbation. The immortal part of me, by the blessi of heaven on me and my congregation, is less weighed dov by human infirmity than when the flesh was stronger. V all grow wiser as we grow older, and I shall in future sele the people about me with more caution; nor submit t castigation of my works but to a much abler critic th yourself. Get about your business! pursued he, giving r an angry shove by the shoulders out of his closet; go a tell my treasurer to pay to you a hundred ducats, and ta my priestly blessing in addition to that sum. God spe you, good Master Gil Blas! I heartily pray that you may well in the world! There is nothing to stand in your wa but the want of a little better taste.

CHAPTER V

THE COURSE WHICH GIL BLAS TOOK AFTER THE ARCHBISH HAD GIVEN HIM HIS DISMISSAL. HIS ACCIDENT MEETING WITH THE LICENTIATE WHO WAS SO DEEP IN HIS DEBT, AND A PICTURE OF GRATITUDE IN TI PERSON OF A PARSON

I MADE the best of my way out of the closet, cursi the caprice, or more properly the dotage of the archbisho and more in dudgeon at his absurdity, than cast dov at the loss of his good graces. For some time it was a mo point whether I should go and lay claim to my hundr ducats; but after having weighed the matter dispassionatel I was not such a fool as to quarrel with my bread and butte There was no reason why that money, fairly earned, shou deprive me of my natural right to make a joke of th ridiculous prelate; in which good deed I promised myse not to be wanting, as often as himself or his homilies we brought upon the carpet in my hearing.

I went, therefore, and asked the treasurer for a hundr ducats, without telling a word about the literary warfa between his master and me. Afterwards I called on Me chior de la Ronda, to take a long leave of him. He w too much my friend not to sympathize with my misfortun

hile I was telling my story vexation was strongly im-nted on my countenance. In spite of all his respect for e archbishop, he could not help blaming him; but, when the fever of my resentment I threatened to be a match for e prelate, and to entertain the whole city at his expense, e prudent Melchior gave me a salutary caution: Take my vice, my dear Gil Blas, and rather pocket the affront. en of a lower sphere of life should always be cap in hand people of quality, whatever may be their grounds of com-aint. It must be admitted, there are some very coarse ecimens of greatness, which in themselves are scarcely serving of the least respect or attention; but even such imals have their weapons of annoyance, and it is best keep out of their way.

I thanked the old valet-de-chambre for the good counsel had given me, and promised to be guided by it. Pleased th my deference to his opinion, he said to me: If you go to adrid, be sure you call upon my nephew, Joseph Navarro. e is factotum in the family of Signor Don Balthazzar de nnigna, and I can venture to recommend him as a lad in ery respect worthy of your friendship. He is just as ture made him, with all the vivacity of youth, courteous his manners, and forward to oblige; I could wish you to t acquainted with him. I answered that I would not fail go and see this Joseph Navarro as soon as I should get to adrid, whither I meant to return in due time. Then did I rn my back on the episcopal palace, never to grace it th my presence again. If I had kept my horse, I should rhaps have set out for Toledo immediately; but I had ld it during the period of my administration, supposing at I was in office for life, and should not henceforward be gratory. My final resolution was to hire a ready-fur-shed lodging, as I had made up my mind to stay another nth in Grenada, and then to pay the Count de Polan a sit.

As dinner-hour was drawing nigh, I asked my landlady there was any eating-house in the neighbourhood. She swered that there was a very good one within a few yards her house, where the accomodations were excellent, and e company select and numerous. I made her shew me here it was, and went thither sharp set. I was shewn to a large room, resembling the hall of a monastery in

everything but good cheer. There were ten or a doz
men sitting at a long table, with a cloth spread over it th
fretted in its own grease; but they, with unoffended nostri
were engaged in general conversation, though they din
individually, each having a miserable scrap for his portio
The people of the house brought me my allowance, whi
at another time would have turned my stomach, and ha
made me sigh after the luxuries of the table I had just lo
But at this moment I was so indignant against the arc
bishop, that the homely fare of a paltry eating-house seem
more palatable than the dainties of his sumptuous boar
It was a burning shame to see such a waste of provisio
served up in soups and sauces to pamper the appeti
Arguing like a deep examiner in the economy of the huma
frame, and reasoning medically as well as philosophicall
on the disproportion between the simple wants of nature a
the complexity of luxurious indulgence; cursed be the
said I, who invented those pernicious dinners and suppe
where one must sit on the tenterhooks of self-denial, f
fear of overloading the storehouse and shop of the whc
body! Man wants but little here below; and provided
can but keep body and soul together, the less he eats t
better. Thus did I, in my surly vein, give utterance
wise saws, which, however just in theory, had hitherto be
little recommended by my practice.

While I was dispatching my commons, without any dang
of a surfeit from repletion, the licentiate Lewis Garcias, wh
had got the living of Gabia in the manner above-mentione
came into the room. The moment he recognised me,
ran into my arms with all the cordiality of friendship,
rather with the extravagant joy of a lover after a long exi
from his mistress. He folded me repeatedly within h
sincere embrace, and I was compelled to stand the brun
of a long-winded compliment on the unparalleled di
interestedness of my conduct towards him. Gratitude is
fine virtue; and yet it is wearisome when carried beyon
due bounds! He took his seat next me, saying: Wel
a parson must not swear; though by the mass, my de
patron, since my good fortune has thrown me in your wa
we will not part without a jovial glass. But as there
no good wine in this shabby inn, I will take you, if yo
please, after our make-shift dinner, to a place where I wi

reat you with a couple of bottles, rich, genuine, and old, in omparison of which the Falernian of Horace was all a urce. The church will give us absolution, in the cause of ratitude! If I could but get you for a few days down at y parsonage of Gabia! Mæcenas was never more welcome o the poet's Sabine farm, than the author of all my ease and omfort to the choicest produce of a glebe which is mine only y your benevolence.

While he was holding this high-flown language, his little ice of dinner was set before him. He fell to without the ar of indigestion before his eyes, still heightening the uxury of the repast at intervals, by fine speeches addressed o me in the most fulsome style of flattery. I took the pportunity, when his mouth was filled with something ore substantial, to edge in a word or two amidst the rrent; and as he had not forgotten to ask after his friend he steward, I made no bones about acknowledging that was no longer a hanger-on of the church. I even went o far as to particularize the most trivial circumstances ttending my resignation, to all of which he listened with a attentive ear. After all his fine professions, who would ot have expected to see him moved even to tears with the roes of resentful gratitude, to hear him thunder bulls nd interdicts against the superannuated archbishop? he devil a bit! he did neither the one thing nor the other. ut his countenance fell, and his whole air was that of an bsent man; the rest of his dinner was bolted down without he garnish of intermediate talk about Mæcenas; as soon as e had done, he hurried from table without minding grace r gratitude, wished me good day with a cold and distant air, nd got off as fast as possible. The unfeeling scoundrel, erceiving that I was no longer in a situation for him to ump anything out of me, would not even take the trouble o draw a decent veil over his dirty principles. But such blackguard could excite no other sensation than contempt nd laughter. Looking at him with derision, the fittest astisement for fellows like these, I called after him loud ough to be heard by the whole room: Stop there, you un's priest! Go and put those two bottles in ice against æcenas comes to the Sabine farm! Be sure they are ch, genuine, and old; or they will be a farce to Falernian.

CHAPTER VI

GIL BLAS GOES TO THE PLAY AT GRENADA. HIS SURPRIS AT SEEING ONE OF THE ACTRESSES, AND WHAT HAPPENE THEREUPON

No sooner had Garcias rid the room of his presence, tha two gentlemen came in, extremely well dressed, and too their seats close by me. They began talking about th players of the Grenada company, and about a new pie which just then had a great run. According to the account, it was quite the town talk. Nothing would d for me, but to go and see it that very day. I had neve been at the play since my residence at Grenada. As I ha lived nearly the whole time in the archbishop's palac where all such profane shows were condemned as uncanonica I had been cut off from every recreation of that sort. A my knowledge of men and manners was drawn fro homilies!

I repaired therefore to the theatre at the appointed hou and found a very full house. All around me, discussion were going on about the piece before the curtain dre up; and there was not a soul in the numerous assembl but had some remark to make upon it. One liked i another could not bear it. Do not you think the dialogu is particularly happy? said a candid critic on my righ Was there ever such miserable stuff! cried a snarling criti on my left. In good truth, if bad authors abound, it mus be admitted that the public are at variance about wha is good and what is bad: but the bad judges have a righ to be pleased for their money; and as they far outnumbe the good ones, their favourite writers can never want em ployment. When one only considers through what an ordea dramatic poets have to pass, it is a matter of wonder tha any should be found hardy enough at once to conten against the ignorance of the multitude, and the rando shot of those self-created guides in matters of taste, wh always pretend to lead the blindness of the public judgmen and too frequently push it into the mire of absurdity.

At length the buffoon of the piece came forward by wa of prologue. As soon as his grotesque countenance wa

visible, there was a general clapping of hands; a sure indication of his being one of those spoiled actors, who are allowed to take any liberties with the pit, and to be applauded through thick and thin. In fact, this player neither opened his lips, nor moved a muscle, without exciting the most extravagant raptures. He would have performed better, had he been less conscious what a favourite he was. But he presumed on that circumstance most abominably. I observed that he sometimes forgot what was set down for him, and took the licence of adding to his part out of his own free fancy; a common cause of complaint against low comedians, which, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve. Would the audience but receive such mirth with hisses, instead of crying bravo, they might restrain the absurd practice, and purge the stage from barbarism.

Some of the other performers were greeted with the usual tokens on their entrance, and particularly an actress who played the chambermaid. There was something about her which more than usually attracted my attention; and language must sink under the labour of expressing my astonishment at tracing the features of Laura, that fair, that chaste, that inexpressible she, whom I supposed to be still at Madrid, warbling in one key, with hands, sides, voice, and mind incorporate with Arsenia. But there could be no doubt of her identity. The kick in her gallop, the leer in her eye, and the tripping pertness of her tongue, all conspired in evidence that there could be no mistake. Yet, as if I had refused belief to the affidavit of my own eyes and ears, I asked her name of a gentleman who was sitting beside me. What the deuce! Why, where do you come from? said he. You must unquestionably be a new importation, not to have seen or heard of the divine Estella.

The likeness was too perfect for me to be mistaken. It was easy to comprehend why Laura, changing her sphere of action, changed her name also; wherefore from curiosity to know how matters stood with her, since the public always pry into the most private concerns of theatrical persons, I inquired of the same man whether this Estella had any particular affair of gallantry on her hands. He informed me that for the last two months there had been a great Portuguese nobleman at Grenada, his name was the

Marquis de Marialva, who had laid out a great deal
money upon her. He might have told me more, if I ha
not been afraid of becoming troublesome with my question
I was better employed in musing on the information th
good gentleman had given me, than in attending to the play
and if any one had asked me what it was all about, whe
the piece was over, I should have been puzzled for a
answer. I could do nothing but decline Laura and Estel
through all cases and numbers; till at length I boldly mad
up my mind to call at her house the next day. Not bu
there was some risk as to the reception she might give me
it might be suspected, without excess of modesty, that m
appearance would give her no great pleasure in the hig
tide of her affairs; nor was it at all improbable that so goo
an actress, to revenge herself on a man, with whom ce
tainly she had an account to settle, might look strang
and swear she had never seen his face before. Yet di
none of these apprehensions deter me from my ventur
After a light supper, for all the meals at my eating-hous
were regulated on principles of economy and temperanc
I withdrew to my chamber with an anxious longing for th
next day.

My sleep was short and interrupted; so that I got up b
daybreak. But as it was to be recollected that a mistres
in high keep was not likely to be visible early in the morning
I passed three or four hours in dressing, shaving, powdering
and perfuming. It was my business to present myself befor
her in a trim, not to put her to the blush at acknowledgin
my acquaintance. I sallied forth about ten o'clock, an
knocked at her door, after having inquired her addres
at the theatre. She was living on the first floor of a larg
and elegant house. I told a chambermaid who opened th
door to me, that a young man wanted to speak with he
lady. The chambermaid went in to give my message
when all at once I heard her mistress call out, not in the best
tempered tone in the world: Who is the young man? Wha
does he want? Shew him upstairs.

This was a hint to me that my time was ill chosen; tha
probably her Portuguese lover was at her toilette, and tha
she spoke so loud, with the laudable design of convincin
him that she was not a sort of girl to allow of any impe
tinent intruders. This conjecture of mine turned out t

e the fact; the Marquis de Marialva lounged away almost very morning with her: I had made up my mind to be icked down-stairs by way of welcome; but that admirable ctress, never forgetting her cue, ran forward with open rms at the sight of me, exclaiming: Ah! my dear brother, is you that I behold? On the strength of so near a kindred, he was no niggard of her embraces; but recollected herelf so far as to say, turning round to the Portuguese, My lord, you must excuse me if nature will put in her claim, nd trench upon good breeding. After three years of bsence, I cannot see a brother once again, whom I love so nderly, without expressing my feelings in all their armth. Come! my dear Gil Blas, continued she, addressing me afresh, tell me some news of the family: in what circumstances did you leave it?

This whimsical scene disconcerted me at first; but I was ot long in seeing through Laura's intention; and playing up o her with a spirit scarcely less than her own, answered ccording to the plot: Heaven be praised, sister, all our ood folks are in perfect health, and well in the world. I nake no doubt, resumed she, but you must be very much urprised to find me an actress in Grenada; but hear me first nd blame me afterwards. It is three years, as you may ecollect, since my father thought to have established me dvantageously in marriage with Don Antonio Cœllo, an fficer in the service, who took me from the Asturias to Madrid, his native place. Six months after our arrival, e got into an affair of honour in consequence of his violent emper. Some attentions incautiously paid to me were he cause of the affray, and his antagonist was killed. his gentleman was of a family high in rank and interest. My husband, who though well born, had very few conections, made his escape into Catalonia with everyhing he could get together in jewels and ready money. He embarked at Barcelona, went over into Italy, enlisted n the Venetian service, and finally lost his life in the Morea, ighting against the Turks. In the mean time, a landed state which constituted our whole revenue was confiscated, nd I was left a widow with very little for my support. What was to be done in so pressing an emergency? There as nothing left to pay my travelling expenses back into he Asturias. And then what should I have done there?

I should have got nothing from my family but a long strin of condolences, which would have furnished me neither wit food nor with raiment. On the other hand, I had been to well brought up to fall into those courses, into which to many poor young women are betrayed for the sake of scandalous subsistence. There was but one thing re maining for me to determine on. I turned actress t preserve my morals.

So tingling a sense of ridicule came over me, when Laur wound up her romance with this pious motive for turnin actress, that I could scarcely refrain from relieving mysel by a fit of laughter. But gravity was of too much conse quence to be dispensed with; and I said to her with an air th counterpart of her own—My dear sister, I entirely approv of your conduct, and am heartily glad to meet with you a Grenada, and moreover settled on so respectable a footing

The Marquis de Marialva, who had not lost a word of al these fine speeches, swallowed down blindfold whatever Do Antonio's widow thought fit to drench his credulity with He took part in the conversation too, and asked me whethe I had any fixed employment in Grenada or elsewhere I paused for a moment to consider whether and afte what manner I should lie; but as there seemed no need i this case to draw on my invention, I told the truth by wa of variety. In a plain matter-of-fact manner did I rehears my introduction to the archbishop's palace, and my dis charge therefrom, to the infinite amusement of his Portu guese lordship. To be sure, in telling the truth, I did no keep my word, for I could not help launching out a little a the archbishop's expense, in spite of my solemn promis given to Melchior. But the best of the joke was, that Laur taking my story for a fiction invented after her example burst out into peals of laughter: whereas the whimsicalit of the circumstances would have raised a soberer mirth had she known it to have been alloyed with the base in gredient of veracity.

After having come to the end of my tale, which close with just mentioning the lodging I had taken, dinner wa announced. I instantly motioned to withdraw, as if in tending to take that frugal meal at home; but Laura woul not hear of it. Do you mean to affront me, brother said she. You must dine here. Indeed, I cannot think o

our staying any longer at a paltry inn. You must positively board and lodge in my house. Send your trunks thither this very evening; there is a spare bed for you.

His Portuguese lordship, possibly not altogether relishing this excess of hospitality even to a brother, then interred between us, and said to Laura—No, Estella, you have ot sufficient accommodation to give him a bed without convenience. Your brother seems to be a clever young dlow; and the circumstance of his being so nearly related you, gives him a strong claim on my kindness. He shall e put at once upon my establishment. I am in want of secretary, and shall delight in giving him the appointrent: he shall be my right-hand man. Let him be sure to me and sleep at my house this very night; I will order a om to be got ready for him. I will fix his regular salary four hundred ducats; and if on better acquaintance I ave reason, as I trust I shall, to be satisfied with him, I will ace him in a situation to laugh at the consequences of aving been a little too plain-spoken with his patron the chbishop.

My acknowledgments to the Marquis for this high nour were followed by those of Laura, who far exceeded e in powers of panegyric. Let us drop the subject, interpted he; it is a settled point. Settled as it was, he conrmed the contract on the lips of his green-room Dulcinea, id went his way. She immediately pulled me by the arm to a closet, where, secure from interruption, she cried ut, Cut my laces! I shall burst if I do not give way at nce to the fit of laughter that is coming over me. And so e probably would; for she threw herself into an armair, and holding both her sides, shouted out her conulsive peal of mirth like a mad woman. It was impssible for me to refrain from following her example. hen we had exhausted our risible propensities, Own, il Blas, said she, that we have just been acting a very morous farce. But I did not look for the concluding ene. My only thought was to secure you board and dging under my own roof; and there was no other posbility of making the proposition in a modest way but passing you off for my brother. But I am heartily ad that the chapter of accidents has opened with so od a berth for you. The Marquis de Marialva is a

nobleman of liberal and honourable sentiments, who w be better than his word in what he does for you. But co fess now! There is scarcely a woman in existence exce myself, would have given so coming-on a reception to fellow who shirks his friends without saying with yo leave or by your leave. I however am one of those simp hearted girls, who are glad to receive back again the ba man they have once loved, though he should have offend and repented seven, or even seven thousand times.

The best way for me was to acknowledge the extren ill-breeding of which I had been guilty, to blush and b pardon once for all. After this explanation, she led t way to a very handsome dining-room. We placed ou selves at table, where, having a chambermaid and a foo boy for eye-witness, we kept within the bounds of broth and sister. When we had done dinner, we went back aga into the same closet where we had been conversing befor Having our time to ourselves, my paragon of a Laur giving herself up to her natural love of merriment, and her no less natural curiosity, required from me a faithf and true narrative of all my pros and cons, my ins and out since that unmannerly separation of ours. I gave h a full and particular account: nothing extenuating on m own behalf, nor setting down aught in malice on the oth side. When I had quenched her thirst after a story, sh slaked mine, by communicating the particulars of her even ful life to the following effect.

CHAPTER VII

LAURA'S STORY

I SHALL just run over to you, as briefly as possible, th circumstances which led me to embrace the theatric profession.

After you took French leave, so much to your credi great events happened. My mistress Arsenia, more su feited with a glut of pleasures than scandalized at the immorality, renounced the stage, and took me with her to fine estate which she had just purchased in the neighbou hood of Zenora with the wages of her sinful life. We soo

ɔt acquainted in the town. Our visits there were very ɐequent, and sometimes for a day or two together. With ıe exception of these little excursions, we were as closely ɒmesticated as probationers in a nunnery, and almost as ɹously employed.

On one of our high days and holidays, Don Felix Mol-ɒnado, the corregidor's only son, saw me by chance, and ʃok a liking to me. He soon found an opportunity of ɐeaking with me in private; and, as it is in vain to affect ɔodesty before one who knows me so well, there was some ʃ:tle contrivance of my own to bring the interview about. ɐe young gentleman was not twenty years of age; the ɹry picture of Venus's sweetheart, or Venus's sweetheart ɹe very picture of him; with a form for a sculptor to work ɹom; with an address so elegant, and with sentiments ɟ generous, as to throw even his personal graces into the ʇckground. There was such a winning way with him, ʃ pressing an earnestness to prevail, when he took a large ıamond from his own finger, and slid it upon mine, that ʌ would have been quite brutal not to have let it stay ɹere. It was really something like sentiment that I ɟgan to entertain towards a swain of so interesting a ıaracter. But what an absurd thing it is for wenches ɹ a certain sort to hook themselves upon young men of ɒmily, when their surly fathers hold official situations! ɐe corregidor, who had scarcely his equal in the whole ʇibe of corregidors, got wind of our correspondence, and ɹetermined to close it in a summary manner. He sent ı host of alguazils to take me into custody, who dragged ɹe away, in spite of my cries and tears, to the house of cor-ʇction for female penitents.

There, without bill of indictment or form of trial, the ɹdy abbess ordered me to be stripped of my ring and my ɔothes, and to be dressed in the habit of the institution; ɹlong gown of grey serge tied about the middle with a ɹrap of black leather, whence depended a rosary with ɟrge beads swinging down to my heels. After this pleas-ıt reception, they took me into a hall, where there was an ɹd monk, the deuce knows of what order, who set to work ɹeaching up repentance and resignation, pretty much in ɹe same strain as Dame Leonarda, when she exhorted you ɟ patience in the subterraneous cavern. He told me that I

was excessively obliged indeed to those good people wh had so kindly shut me up, and could never thank the sufficiently for their good deed, in rescuing me from th harpy talons of the world, the flesh, and the devil. B I must frankly own that all my other sins were presse down and heaped high with ingratitude: far from ove flowing with the milk of human kindness towards tho who had conferred such a favour upon me, I abused the in terms that would have put any dictionary to the blus

Eight days thus passed in this wilderness of desolatio but on the ninth, for I had notched the hours and even th minutes on a stick, my fate seemed beginning to take anoth turn. Crossing a little court, I met the house stewar a personage whose will was absolute; yes, the lady abbe herself was obedient to his will. He rendered an accou of his stewardship to none but the corregidor, on who alone he was dependent, and whose confidence in him w unbounded. His name was Pedro Zendono, and the tow of Salsedon in Biscay laid claim to the honour of his birt Figure to yourself a tall man, with the complexion of mummy and the bare anatomy of a dealer in mortificatio he might have sat for the penitent thief in a picture the crucifixion. He scarcely ever cast a carnal glance t wards us Magdalens. You never saw such a face of ra hypocrisy in all your life, though you have spent som part of it under the same roof with the archbishop, an are not unacquainted with the clergy of his diocese.

But to return from this digression; . . . . I met this Signo Zendono, who said to me slily as he passed—Take comfor my girl, I am sensibly affected with your wretched cas He said no more, and went on his way, leaving me to mak my own comments on so concise and general a text. A he looked like a good man, and there was no positive ev dence to set against his looks, I was simpleton enough t fancy that he had taken the trouble of inquiring why I wa shut up; and meant, not finding me so atrocious a cu prit as to deserve such shameful insults, to take my pa with the corregidor. But I was not up to the tricks of th Biscayan, he had a much longer head. He was turnin over in his mind the scheme of an elopement, and mad the proposal to me in profound privacy some days afte wards. My dear Laura, said he, your sufferings have take

ich deep possession of my mind, that I have determined o end them. I am perfectly aware that my own ruin is in- olved in the measure, but needs must when the tender assion drives. To-morrow morning do I intend to take ou out of prison, and conduct you in person to Madrid. o sacrifice is too great for the pleasure of being your eliverer.

I was very near fainting with surprise and joy at this romise of Zendono, who, concluding from my acknow- dgments that my very life depended on my rescue, had ne effrontery to carry me off next day in the face of the hole town, by the following device—He told the lady bbess that he had orders to take me before the corregidor, ho was at his country box a few miles off; and without tetraying himself by a single change of countenance, acked me off, with him for my companion, in a post- haise drawn by two good mules which he had bought for ne occasion. Our only attendant was the driver, a ser- ant of his own, and entirely devoted to the steward by tronger ties than those of gratitude. We began bowling way, not in the direction of Madrid, as I had taken for ranted, but towards the frontiers of Portugal, whither e got in less time than it took the corregidor of Zamora to eceive the deposition of our flight, and uncouple his pack r set them barking at our heels.

Before we entered Braganza, the Biscayan made me put n man's clothes, with which he had taken the precaution of roviding himself. Reckoning on me as being fairly aunched in the same boat with him, he said to me in the nn where we put up, Lovely Laura, do not take it unkindly f me to have brought you into Portugal. The corregidor of amora will make our own country too hot to hold us, or in his eyes we are two criminals, under the weight of hose enormities it is not for Spain to groan. But we may et his malice at defiance in this distant realm, though at the resent conjuncture under the dominion of the Spanish onarchy. At least we shall stand a better chance for afety here than at home. League your fortunes with ose of a man who would follow you in prosperity or in dversity through the world. Let us fix our residence at oimbra. There I will get employed as a spy for the in- uisition; under the cover of that formidable tribunal,

a refreshing shade for us, but Cimmerian darkness to i victims, our days will glide smoothly on in ease and pleasur we shall fatten on the spoil of religious delinquency.

A proposal so much to the point gave me to unde stand that I had to do with a knight, who had other motive for officiating as the guardian of distressed damsel besides the honour of chivalry. I saw at once that h reckoned much on my gratitude, and still more on m distress. Nevertheless, though these two pleas were almos equally eloquent in his favour, I rejected his addresses wit disdain. The reason was, that there were two advocate still more eloquent on the side of a refusal; a certainty tha he was disagreeable, and a strong suspicion that he wa poor. But when he returned to the charge, and offered t say the grace of matrimony before he fell to, proving t me at the same time, by the undeniable evidence of cas in hand, that his stewardship had enabled him to live i clover for a long time to come, the truth must come out i spite of blushes; my heart was softened, and my ears un stopped. I was dazzled by the gold and jewels which h laid out in burning row before me, and became a livin monument in my own person, that miraculous transforma tions are effected by the power of pelf, as well as by the wan of love. My Biscayan became, by little and little, quit another sort of man in my eyes. His tall body and bar bones were plumped up into a shapely and commandin figure; his cadaverous complexion was improved int a manly brown; even that look, as if butter would not mel in his mouth, was no longer hypocrisy, but a staid an decent aspect. Having made these discoveries, I ac cepted his hand without any material abhorrence, and h plighted the usual vows in all due form. After this, lik a good wife, I kept the spirit of contradiction as much a possible under the hatches. We resumed our journey, an Coimbra soon received a new family within its walls.

My husband stocked my wardrobe as became my se and station, making me a present of several diamonds among which I fixed my eye on that of Don Felix Mal donado. There were no further documents wanting t give a shrewd guess whence came all the precious stone I had seen, and to be morally certain that I had not marrie a troublesomely nice observer of the eighth article in th

ecalogue. Yet, considering myself as the main-spring f all his little deviations from the strict law of propriety, was not for me to judge harshly on that point. A woman an always find a palliation for the misdeeds which are set motion by the power of her own beauty. But for that, e certainly would have ranked no higher than one of the icked in my estimation.

I had no great reason to complain of him for two or aree months. His attentions were always polite and kind, mounting apparently to a sincere and tender affection. tut no such thing! These proofs of wedded love, this rorshipping with the body, and endowing with the worldly oods, were all but a copy of his countenance; for the neating fellow meant, as men serve a cucumber, to throw e away on the first opportunity. One morning, at my turn from mass, I found nothing at home but the bare alls; the moveables, not excepting my own apparel, every ick and every thread, had been carried off. Zendono hd his faithful servant had taken their measures so adbitly, that in less than an hour the house had been comletely gutted; so that with nothing but the gown upon my ack, and Don Felix's ring, as good luck would have it, on y finger, here stood I, like another Ariadne, abandoned y the ungrateful rifler of my effects as well as of my charms. tut you may take my word for it, I did not beguile the nse of my misfortunes in tragedy, elegy, scene individable, poem unlimited. I rather fell upon my knees, and blessed y guardian angel, for having delivered me from a rascal ho must sooner or later fall into the hands of justice. he time we had passed together I considered in the light a dead loss, and my spirits were all on the alert to make o for it. If I had been inclined to stay in Portugal, as a nger-on to some woman of fashion, I should have found o difficulty in suiting myself; but whether it was patriotism, some astrological conjunction, preparing a better forne for me under the influence of the planets, my whole art was bent on getting back into Spain. I applied to a weller, who valued my diamond and gave me cash for it, d then took my departure with an old Spanish lady who as going to Seville in a post-chaise.

This lady, whose name was Dorothea, had been to see a lation settled at Coimbra, and was on her return to

Seville, where she lived. There was such a sympathy between us, as made us fast friends on the very first day o our acquaintance; and the attachment grew so close whil we travelled together, that the lady insisted, at our jour ney's end, on my making her house my home. I had n reason to repent having formed such a connection. Neve was there a woman of a more charming character. On might still conclude from the turn of her countenance, an from the spirit not yet quenched in her eyes, that in he youth the catgut of many a guitar must have been frette under her window. As a proof of this, she had many trial what a state of widowhood was; her husbands had all beer of noble birth, and her finances were flourishing on th accumulation of her several jointures.

Among other admirable qualities, she had that of no visiting severely the frailties of her own sex. When I let he into the secret of mine, she entered so warmly into m interests, as to speak of Zendono with more sincerity tha good manners. What graceless fellows these men are! sai she in a tone from which one might infer that she had me with some light-fingered steward in the passing of he accounts. They would not be worth picking off a dunghill if one could do without them! There is a large fraternity of sorry scoundrels in the world, who make it their spor to gain the hearts of women, and then desert them. There is, however, one consoling circumstance, my dear child According to your account, you are by no means boun fast to that faithless Biscayan. If your marriage with hi was sufficiently formal to save your credit with the world on the other hand, it was contracted loosely enough t admit of your trying your luck at a better match, whenever an opportunity may fall in your way.

I went out every day with Dorothea, either to church, o to visit among her friends; both likely occasions of pickin up an adventure; so that I attracted the notice of severa gentlemen. There were some of them who had a mind t feel how the land lay. They made their proposals to m venerable protectress; but these had not wherewithal t defray the expenses of an establishment, and those were mer unfledged boys under age; an insuperable objection, whic left me very little merit in turning a deaf ear to them. On day a whim seized Dorothea and me, to go and see a pla

Seville. The bills announced a favourite and standard
ece: El Embaxador de Si-mismo, written by Lope de Vega.
Among the actresses who came upon the stage, I dis-
vered one of my old cronies. It was impossible to have
rgotten Phenicia, that bouncing good-humoured girl
hom you have seen as Florimonde's waiting maid, and have
pped with more than once at Arsenia's. I was aware
at Phenicia had left Madrid above two years ago, but
id never heard of her turning actress. I longed so
rnestly to embrace her, that the piece appeared quite
dious. Perhaps, too, there might be some fault in
ose who played it, as being neither good enough nor
id enough to afford me entertainment. For as to my own
mper, which is that of seeking diversion wherever I can
nd it, I must confess that an actor supremely ridiculous
swers my purpose just as well as the most finished per-
rmer of the age.

At last, the moment I had been waiting for being arrived,
mely the dropping of the curtain on this favourite and
andard piece, we went, for my widow would go with me,
ehind the scenes, where we caught a glimpse of Phenicia,
ho was playing off the amiable and unaffected simpleton,
nd listening with all the primness of studied simplicity to
ae soft chirping of a young stagefinch, who had evidently
ffered himself to be caught in the birdlime of her pro-
ssional or meretricious talents. No sooner did her eye
eet mine, than she quitted him with a genteel apology,
n up to me with open arms, and lavished upon me all the
emonstrations of strong attachment imaginable. Our
xpressions of joy at this unexpected meeting were indeed
ciprocal; but neither time nor place admitting of any
ery copious indulgence in the privilege of asking questions,
e adjourned till the following day, with a promise of re-
ewing our mutual inquiries thick and threefold, under
ne shelter of her friendly roof.

The pleasure of talking is the inextinguishable passion of
oman, coeval with the act of breathing. I could not get
wink of sleep all night, for the burning desire of having a
rapple with Phenicia, and closing in upon her in the con-
ict of curiosity. Witness all the powers who preside over
ttling, whether the love of lying in bed, another passion
f woman, prevented me from getting up and flying to my

appointment as early as good manners would allow. She live with the rest of the company in a large ready-furnishe lodging. A female attendant who met me at entrance, o being requested to show me Phenicia's apartment, le the way up-stairs to a gallery, along which were ranged te or twelve small rooms, divided only by partitions of dea boards, and inhabited by this merry band. My con ductress knocked at a door which Phenicia opened; fo her tongue was cruelly on the fidget to be let loose, as well a my own. We allowed ourselves no time for the impert nent ceremonies which usually usher in a visit, but plunge at once into a most furious career of loquacity. It seeme as if we should have a tight bout together. There were s many interrogatories to be bandied backwards and for wards, that question and answer rebounded like tennis balls, only with ten-fold velocity.

After having related our adventures each to other, an inquired into the actual condition of affairs, Phenicia aske me how I meant to provide for myself. My reply was, tha I purposed, while waiting for something better, to get situation with some young lady of quality. For shame exclaimed my other self, you shall not think of such a thing Is it possible, my darling, that you should not yet be dis gusted with menial service? Are you not heartily sick o knocking under to the good or ill pleasure of others, o being cap-in-hand to all their caprices, and after all to b entertained with that unchangeable tune called a scolding in a word, to be a downright slave? Why do not you follow my example, and turn your thoughts towards th stage? Nothing can be better suited to people of parts when they happen not to be equally favoured in the articles of wealth and birth. It is a sphere of life which holds a middle rank between the nobility and mere tradespeople a profession exempted from all troublesome restraint, and raised far above the common prejudices of humble and decent society. The public are our bankers, and we draw upon them at sight. We live in a continual round of ecstasy and spend our money to the full as fast as we earn it.

The theatre (for she went on at a great rate) is favourable above all to women. When I lived with Florimonde, it is a misery to think of it, I was reduced to take up with the supernumeraries of the prince's company; not a single man

fashion paid the least attention to my figure. How me that about? Because they never got a glimpse of it. ne finest picture in the world may escape the admiration the connoisseurs, if it is not placed in a proper light. ut since I have been suitably framed and varnished, which uld only happen in consequence of a theatrical finish, hat a revolution! The finest young fellows of all the wns we pass through are shuffling at my heels. An tress therefore has all her little comforts about her, ithout deviating from the line of her duty. If she is screet, by which we mean that she should not admit ore than one lover into her good graces at a time, her emplary conduct is cried up as without a parallel. She called a very Niobe for her coldness; and when she anges her favourite, she is reprimanded as slightly by e world, as a lawful widow who marries a few weeks too on after the death of her first husband. If, however, e widow should look for luck in odd numbers, and take herself a third, the contempt of all mankind is poured wn on her devoted head; she is considered as a monster indelicacy; whereas we happier women are so much the ore in vogue, as we add to the list of our favourites. fter having been served up to a hundred different lovers, me battered nobleman finds us a dainty dish for him-lf.

Do you mean that by way of news? interrupted I as e uttered the last sentiment. Do you imagine me to be norant of these advantages? I have often conned them er in my mind, and they are but too alluring to a girl of y character. The attractions of the stage would be resistible, were inclination all. But some little talent is dispensable; and I have not a spark. I have sometimes ttempted to rehearse passages from plays before Arsenia. he was never satisfied with my performance; and that dis-usted me with the profession. You are easily put out of onceit with yourself, replied Phenicia. Do not you know at these great actresses are very apt to be jealous? With l their vanity, they are afraid lest some newer face should ut them out of countenance. In short, I would not be ided by Arsenia on that subject; she did not give her real inion. In my judgment, and without meaning to flatter u, the theatre is your natural element. You have ad-

mirable powers, free and graceful action, a fine-toned voic volubility of declamation, and such a turn of countenance Ah! you little rogue! you will bring all the young fellow behind the scenes, if once you take to the boards!

She plied me with many flattering compliments besides and made me recite some lines, only by way of enablin me to form my own judgment as to my theatrical genius Now that she was my censor, it seemed quite anothe thing. She praised me up to the skies, and held all th actresses in Madrid as mere makeweights in the scale After such a testimony, it would have been inexcusabl to hesitate about my own merit. Arsenia stood attainted nay, convicted of jealousy and treachery. There could b no question about my being everything that was de lightful. Two players happened to drop in by accident and Phenicia prevailed on me to repeat the lines I ha already spouted; they fell into a sort of enthusiastic trance whence they were roused only to launch out fervently i admiration of me. Literally, had they all three bee flattering me up for a wager, they could not have adopte a more extravagant scale of panegyric. My modesty was not proof against such praise from those who were themselves praised. I began to think myself really worthy of something; and now was my whole heart and soul turned towards a theatrical life.

Since this is the case, said I to Phenicia, the affair i determined. I will follow your advice and engage in your company, if they will accept me. My friend, transported with joy at this proposal, clasped me in her arms; and he two companions seemed no less delighted than herself at finding me in that humour. It was settled that I should attend the theatre on the following day in the morning, and exhibit before the collected body the same sample of my talent as I had just displayed. If I had bought golden opinions from Phenicia and her friends, the actors in genera were still more complimentary in their judgment, after I had recited but twenty lines before them. They gave me an engagement with the utmost willingness. Then there was nothing thought of but my first appearance. To make it as striking as possible, I laid out all the money remaining from the sale of my ring; and though my funds would no allow of being splendid in my dress, I discovered the art o

ubstituting taste for glitter, and converting my poverty nto a new grace.

At length I came out. What clapping of hands! what eneral admiration! It would be speaking faintly, my iend, to tell you downright that the spectators were all in n ecstasy. You must have heard with your own ears hat a noise I made at Seville, to believe it. The whole talk f the town was about me, and the house was crowded for hree weeks successively; so that this novelty restored the heatre to its popularity, when it was evidently beginning o decline. Thus did I come upon the stage, and step into ublic favour at once. But to come upon the stage with uch distinction, is generally a prelude to coming upon the own; or at least to putting one's self up at auction to he best bidder. Twenty sparks of all ages, from seventeen o seventy, were on the list of candidates, and would have orn me in my newest gloss. Had I followed my own nclinations, I should have chosen the youngest, and the ost of a lady's man; but in our profession, interest and mbition must bear the sway, till we have feathered our est; that is as invariable a rule as any in the prompt book. n this principle, Don Ambrosio de Nisana, a man in whom ge and ugliness had done their worst, but rich, generous, nd one of the most powerful noblemen in Andalusia, ad the refusal of the bargain. It is true that he paid andsomely for it. He took a fine house for me, furnished n the extreme of magnificence, allowed me a man cook of he first eminence, two footmen, a lady's maid, and a housand ducats a month for my personal expenses. Add o all this a rich wardrobe and an elegant assortment of ewels.

What a revolution in my affairs! My poor brain was com-letely turned. I could not believe myself to be the same erson. No wonder if girls soon forget the meanness and isery whence some man of quality has rescued them in a t of caprice. My confession shall be without reserve: ublic applause, flattering speeches buzzed about on every de, and Don Ambrosio's passion kindled such a flame of elf-conceit as kept me in a continual ferment of extrava-ance. I considered my talents as a patent of nobility. put on the woman of fashion; and becoming as chary as had hitherto been lavish of my amorous challengers,

determined to look no lower than dukes, counts, or marquises.

My lord of Nisana brought some of his friends to sup with me every evening. It was my care to invite the best companions among our actresses, and we wore away a good part of the night in laughing and drinking. I fell in very kindly with so delicious a life, but it lasted only six months. Men of rank are apt to be whimsical; but for that fault, they would be too heavenly. Don Ambrosio deserted me for a young coquette from Grenada, who had just brought a pretty person to the Seville market, and knew how to set off her wares to the best advantage. But I did not fret after him more than four-and-twenty hours. His place was supplied by a young fellow of two-and-twenty, Don Lewis d' Alcacer, with whom few Spaniards could vie in point of face and figure.

You will ask me, doubtless, and it is natural to do so, why I selected so green a sprig of nobility for my paramour, when my own experience so strongly dissuaded from such a choice. But, besides that Don Lewis had neither father nor mother, and was already in possession of his fortune, you are to know that there is no danger of disagreeable consequences attaching to any but girls in a servile condition of life, or those unfortunate loose fish who are game for every sportsman. Ladies of our profession are privileged persons; we let off our charms like a rocket, and are not answerable for the damage where they fall; so much the worse for those families whose heirs we set in a blaze.

As for Alcacer and myself, we were so strongly attached to one another, that I verily believe, love never yet did such execution as when he took aim at us two. Our passion was of such a violent nature, that we seemed to be under the influence of some spell. Those who knew how well we were together, thought us the happiest pair in the world; but we, who knew best, found ourselves the most miserable. Though Don Lewis had as fine an outside as ever fell to the lot of man, he was at the same time so jealous, that there was no living for vexation at his unfounded surmises. It was of no use, knowing his weakness and humouring it, to lay an embargo on my looks, if ever a male creature peeped into harbour; his suspicious temper, seldom at a loss for some crime to impute, rendered my armed neu-

lality of no avail. Our most tender moments had always a pice of wrangling. There was no standing the brunt of it; atience could hold out no longer on either side, and we uarrelled more peaceably than we had loved. Could you elieve that the last day of our being together was the appiest? both equally wearied out by the perpetual re-irrence of unpleasant circumstances, we gave a loose to ur transports when we embraced for the last time. We ere like two wretched captives, breathing the fresh air of berty after all the horrors of our prison-house.

Since that adventure, I have worn a breastplate against ne little archer. No more amorous nonsense for me, at least a troublesome excess! It is quite out of our line, to sigh nd complain like Arcadian shepherdesses. Those should ever give way to a passion in private, who hold it up to idicule before the public.

While these events were passing in my domestic estab-shment, Fame had not hung her trumpet breathless on the illows; she spread it about universally that I was an imitable actress. That celestial tattler, though bank-upt times out of number, still contrives to revive her credit; ne comedians of Grenada therefore wrote to offer me an ngagement in their company; and by way of evidence nat the proposal was not to be scorned, they sent me a tatement of their daily receipts and disbursements, with heir terms, which seemed to be advantageous. That being he case, I closed, though grieved in my heart to part with 'henicia and Dorothea, whom I loved as well as woman is apable of loving woman. I left the first laudably em-loyed in melting the plate of a little haggling goldsmith, whose vanity so far got the better of his avarice that he nust needs have a theatrical heroine for his mistress. forgot to tell you that on my translation to the stage, rom mere whim, I changed the name of Laura to that of Estella, and it was under the latter name that I took this ngagement at Grenada.

My first appearance was no less successful here than at eville; and I soon felt myself wafted along by the sighs of ny admirers. But resolving not to favour any except n honourable terms, I kept a guard of modesty in my inter-ourse with them, which threw dust in their eyes. Never-heless, not to be the dupe of virtues which pay very in-

differently, and were not exactly at home in their new mansion, I was balancing whether or not to take up with a young fellow of mean extraction, who had a place under government, and assumed the style of a gentleman in virtue of his office, with a good table and handsome equipage, when I saw the Marquis de Marialva for the first time. This Portuguese nobleman, travelling over Spain from mere curiosity, stopped at Grenada as he passed through it. He came to the play. I did not perform that evening. His examination of the actresses was very particular, and he found one to his liking. Their acquaintance commenced on the very next day; and the definitive treaty was very nearly concluded when I appeared upon the stage. What with some personal graces, and no little affectation in setting them off, the weather-cock veered about all on a sudden; my Portuguese was mine and mine only till death do us part. Yet, since the truth must be told, I knew perfectly that my sister of the sock and buskin had entrapped this nobleman, and spared no pains to chouse her out of her prize; to my success you are yourself a witness. She bears me no small grudge on that account; but the thing could not be avoided. She ought to reflect that it is the way of all female flesh; that the dearest friends play off the same trick upon one another, and put a good face upon it into the bargain.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RECEPTION OF GIL BLAS AMONG THE PLAYERS AT GRENADA; AND ANOTHER OLD ACQUAINTANCE PICKED UP IN THE GREEN-ROOM

JUST as Laura was finishing her story, there came in an old actress who lived in her neighbourhood, and was come to take her to the theatre as she passed by. This venerable tutelary of the stage was admirably fitted to play some superannuated strumpet among the heathen goddesses in a pantomime. My sister was not remiss in introducing her brother to that stale old harridan, whereupon a profusion of compliments were bandied about on both sides.

I left them together, telling the steward's relict that I would join her again at the playhouse, as soon as I had

ent my baggage to the Marquis de Marialva's, to whose residence she directed me. First I went to the room I had hired, whence, after having settled with my landlady, I repaired with a porter who carried my luggage to a large ready-furnished house, where my new master was quartered. At the door I met his steward, who asked me if I was not the lady Estella's brother. I answered in the affirmative. Then you are welcome, Signor cavalier, replied he. The Marquis de Marialva, whose steward I have the honour to be, has commissioned me to receive you properly. There is a room got ready for you; I will show you the way to it, if you please, that you may be quite at home. He took me up to the top of the house, and thrust me into so small a room, that a very narrow bed, a chest of drawers, and two chairs completely filled it. This was my apartment. You will not have much spare room, said my conductor, but as a set-off, I promise you that you shall be superbly lodged at Lisbon. I locked up my portmanteau in the wardrobe and put the key in my pocket, asking at the same time what was the hour of supper. The answer was, that his lordship seldom supped at home, but allowed each servant a monthly sum for board wages. I put several other questions, and learnt that the Marquis's people were a happy set of idle fellows. After a conversation short and sweet, I left the steward to go and look for Laura, reflecting much to my own satisfaction on the happy omens I drew from the opening of my new situation.

As soon as I got to the playhouse door, and mentioned my name as Estella's brother, there was free admission at once. You might have observed the forwardness of the guards to make way for me, just as if I had been one of the most considerable noblemen in Grenada. All the supernumeraries, door-keepers, and receivers of checks whom I encountered in my progress, made me their very best bows. But what I should like best to give the reader an idea of, is the serious reception which the merry vagrants gave me in the green-room, where I found the whole dramatis personæ ready dressed, and on the point of drawing up the curtain. The actors and actresses to whom Laura introduced me, fell upon me without mercy. The men were quite troublesome with their greetings; and the women, not to be outdone, laid their plastered faces

alongside of mine, till they covered it with a villanous compound of red and white. No one choosing to be the last in making me welcome, they all paid their compliments in a breath. Æolus himself, answering from all the points of the compass at once, would not have been a match for them: but my sister was; for the loan of her tongue was always at the service of a friend, and she brought me completely out of debt.

But I did not get clear off with the squeezes of the principal performers. The civilities of the scene-painters, the band, the prompter, the candle-snuffer, and the call-boy were to be endured with patience; all the understrappers in the theatre came to see me run the gauntlet. One would have supposed one's self in a foundling hospital, and that they had none of them ever known what sort of animals brothers and sisters were.

In the mean time the play began. Some gentlemen who were behind the scenes, then ran to get seats in the front of the house; for my part, feeling myself quite at home, I continued in conversation with those of the actors who were waiting to go on. Among the number there was one whom they called Melchior. The name struck me. I looked hard at the person who answered to it, and thought I had seen him somewhere. At last I recollected that it was Melchior Zapata, a poor strolling player, who has been described in the first volume of this true history, as soaking his crusts in the pure element.

I immediately took him aside, and said: I am much mistaken if you are not that Signor Melchior with whom I had the honour of breakfasting one day by the margin of a clear fountain, between Valladolid and Segovia. I was with a journeyman barber. We had some provisions with us which we clubbed with yours, and all three partook of a little rural feast, to which wit and anecdote gave additional relish. Zapata bethought him for a minute or two, and then answered: You tell me of a circumstance which often since came across my mind. I had then just been trying my fortune at Madrid, and was returning to Zamora. I recollect perfectly that my affairs were a little out at elbows. I recollect it too, replied I, by the token of a doublet which you wore, lined with play-bills. Neither have I forgotten that you complained of having a wife cursed with in-

rruptible chastity. Oh! that misfortune has found its
medy long ago, said Zapata, shaking his ears. By all
e powers of womanhood, the jade has effectually reformed
at virtue, and given me a warmer lining to my doublet.
I was going to congratulate him on his wife's having shewn
much sense, when he was obliged to leave me and go on
e stage. Being curious to know what sort of an animal
s wife was, I went up to an actor and desired him to point
r out. He did so, saying at the same time: There she
it is Narcissa; the prettiest of all our women except
ur sister. I concluded that this must be the actress
whose favour the Marquis de Marialva had declared be-
re meeting with his Estella; and my conjecture was but
o correct. After the play I attended Laura home, where
saw several cooks preparing a handsome entertainment.
ou may sup here, said she. I will do no such thing,
swered I; the marquis perhaps will like to be alone with
u. Not at all, replied she; he is coming with two of his
n friends and one of our gentlemen; you will just make
e sixth. You know that in our free and easy way there
no impropriety in secretaries sitting down at table with
eir masters. Very true, said I: but it is rather too soon to
sume the privilege of a favourite. I must first get em-
oyed in some confidential commission, and then lay in my
im to that honourable distinction. Judging it to be so
st, I went out of Laura's house, and got back to my inn,
ither I reckoned on repairing every day, since my master
d no regular establishment.

CHAPTER IX

AN EXTRAORDINARY COMPANION AT SUPPER; AND AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR CONVERSATION

I REMARKED in the coffee-room a sort of an old monk,
bited in coarse grey cloth, at supper quite alone in a
rner. I went and sat opposite to him out of curiosity; we
changed a civil bow, and he showed himself to be quite
well bred as I was, notwithstanding my lay education. My
mmons were brought me, and I fell to with a very catholic
petite. While I was eating, my tongue was mute, but

my eyes glanced by snatches towards this singular character, and always caught his at the same employment. Liking better to stare than be stared at, I addressed my speech to him thus: Pray, father, have we ever by any chance met anywhere but here? You peer at me as if you scarcely knew whether I was an acquaintance or a stranger. He answered gravely: If I look at you with fixed attention, it is only to admire the prodigious variety of adventures which are chronicled in the features of your face. It should seem, said I in a joking tone, as if your reverence was something of a physiognomist. Far more deeply imbued in science than a mere physiognomist, answered the monk, I found prophecies on my observations which have never been belied by the event. My skill in palmistry is no less, and I will set my oracles against the surest of antiquity, after comparing the inspection of the hand with that of the face.

Though this old man had all the appearance of profound wisdom, his talk was so like that of a madman, that I could not help laughing at him out-right. So far from being offended at my want of manners, he smiled at it, and went on to the following effect, after running his eye round the coffee-room, to be assured that there were no listeners: I am not surprised at finding you so prejudiced against two sciences which pass at this time of day for mere frivolity; the long and painful study they require disheartens the learned, who turn their backs upon them, and then swear that they are fables out of disgust at having missed their attainment. For my part, I am not to be frightened by the darkness which envelops them, any more than by the difficulties which are perpetual stumbling-blocks in the pursuit of chemical discoveries, and in the marvellous art of transmuting baser metals into gold.

But I do flatter myself, pursued he, looking steadfastly at me, that I am addressing a young gentleman of good sense, to whom my systems will not appear altogether in the light of idle dreams. A sample of my skill will dispose you better than the most subtle arguments to pass a favourable judgment on my pretensions. After talking in this manner he drew from his pocket a phial full of a lively-looking red liquor, on which he expatiated thus: Here is an elixir which I have distilled this morning from the juices of certain plants; for I have employed almost my

hole life, like Democritus, in finding out the properties f simples and minerals. You shall make trial of its virtue. he wine we are drinking with our supper is very bad; enceforth it will become excellent. At the same time e put two drops of his elixir into my bottle, which made ny wine more delicious than the choicest vintages of Spain.

The marvellous strikes the imagination; and when once nat faculty is enlisted, judgment is turned adrift. Deghted with so glorious a secret, and persuaded that he nust have out-deviled the devil before he could have got t it, I cried out in a paroxysm of admiration: O reverend ather! prythee forgive your servant if he took you at first or an old blockhead. I now abjure my error. There is o need to look further to be assured that it depends only n your own will to turn an iron bar into a wedge of gold in ne twinkling of an eye. How happy should I be were I aaster of that admirable science! Heaven preserve you com ever acquiring it, interrupted the old man with a deep gh. You know not, my son, what a fatal possession you ovet. Instead of envying, rather pity me, for having aken such infinite pains to be made unhappy. I am always isturbed in mind. I fear a discovery; and then perpetual nprisonment would be the reward of all my labours. In is apprehension I lead a vagabond life, sometimes disuised as a priest or monk, sometimes as a gentleman or peasant. Where is the benefit of knowing how to manucture gold on such terms? Are not the goods of this orld downright misery to those who cannot enjoy them in anquillity?

What you say appears to me very sensible, said I to the hilosopher. There is nothing like living at one's ease. ou have rid me of all hankering after the philosopher's one. I will rest satisfied with learning from you my ture destiny. With all my heart, my good lad, answered e. I have already made my remarks upon your features; ow let me see your hand. I gave it him with a confidence hich will do my penetration but little credit in the esteem f some readers. He examined it very attentively, and then ronounced, as in a rapture of inspiration: Ah! what ansitions from pain to pleasure, and from pleasure to ain! What a whimsical alternation of good and evil nances! But you have already experienced the largest

share of your allotted reverses. You have but few more tides of misfortune to stem, and then a great lord will contrive for you an eligible fate, which shall not be subject to change.

After having assured me that I might depend on his prediction, he bade me farewell and went out of the inn leaving me in deep meditation on the things I had just heard. There could be no doubt of the Marquis de Marialva being the great lord in question; and consequently nothing appeared more within the verge of possibility than the accomplishment of the oracle. But though there had not been the slightest likelihood, that would have been no hindrance to giving the impostor monk unbounded credit since his elixir had transmuted my sour incredulity into the most tractable digestion of his falsehoods. That nothing might be wanting on my side to play into the hands of my foreboded luck, I determined to attach myself more closely to the marquis than I had ever done to any of my masters. Having taken this resolution, I went home in unusually high spirits; never did foolish woman descend in better humour from the garret of another foolish woman who had told her fortune.

CHAPTER X

THE MARQUIS DE MARIALVA GIVES A COMMISSION TO GIL BLAS. THAT FAITHFUL SECRETARY ACQUITS HIMSELF OF IT AS SHALL BE RELATED

THE marquis was not yet returned from his theatrical party, and I found his upper servants playing at cards in his apartment while they were waiting for his arrival. I got to be sociable with them; and we amused ourselves with jocular conversation till two o'clock in the morning, when our master arrived. He was a little surprised at seeing me and said with an air of kindness which made me conclude that he came home very well satisfied with his evening. How is this, Gil Blas? Are you not gone to bed yet? I answered that I wished to know first whether he had any commands for me. Probably, replied he, I may have a commission to give you to-morrow morning; but it will

e time enough then to acquaint you with my wishes. Go o your own room; and henceforward remember that I ispense with your attendance at bed-time; my other ervants are sufficient for that occasion.

After this hint, which was much to my satisfaction in the ain, since it spared me a slavery which I should have felt ery unpleasantly at times, I left the marquis in his apartent, and withdrew to my garret. I went to bed. Not ieing able to sleep, it seemed good to follow the counsel of 'ythagoras, and to examine all the actions of the day by he test of reason; to reprimand severely what had been one amiss, and if anything had been done well, to rejoice n it.

On looking into the day-book of my conscience, the balnce was not sufficiently in my favour to keep me in ood humour with myself. I felt remorse at having lent yself to Laura's imposition. It was in vain to urge, in lf-defence, that I could not, with any decency, give the e to a girl who had no object in view but to do me a pleasure, nd that I was in some sort under the necessity of becoming n accomplice in the fraud. This was a paltry excuse in he darkness of the night, for I pleaded against myself at at all events the matter should be pushed no further, nd that it was the summit of impudence to remain upon he establishment of a nobleman whose confidence I so ill paid. In short, after a severe trial, it was agreed in my wn breast, that I was very little short of an arrant knave.

But to have done with the morality of the act, and pass on the probable issue, it was evidently playing a desperate ame, to cozen a man of consequence who might be enabled, s an instrument for the visitation of my sins perhaps, o detect the imposture in its very infancy. A reflection at nce so prudent and so virtuous acted as a refrigerator on y spirits; but visions of pleasure and of interest soon ised them again above the freezing point. Besides, the ophecy of the man with the elixir would have been ough to put me in heart once more. I therefore gave yself up to the indulgence of the most agreeable fancies. ll the rules of arithmetic, from simple addition to compound interest were set in array, to cast up what sum my lary would amount to at the end of ten years' service. hen there was a large allowance for presents and gratuities

from my master, whose liberal disposition according admirably with my liberal desires, my imagination grew quite fantastical, and extended the landmarks of my fortune over innumerable acres of unsubstantial territory. Sleep overtook me in the calculation, and raised a magnificent aerial mansion on the estate where a new race of grandees was to originate.

I got up next morning about eight o'clock to go and receive my patron's orders; but as I was opening my door to go out, what was my surprise at meeting him in his wrapping-gown and night-cap. He was quite alone. Gil Blas, said he, on parting with your sister last night, I promised to pass this morning with her; but an affair of consequence will not admit of my keeping my word. Go and assure her from me that I am deeply mortified at the disappointment, but that I shall certainly sup with her to-night. That is not all, added he, putting a purse into my hands and a little shagreen case set round with diamonds, carry her my portrait, and keep this purse of fifty pistoles which I give you as a mark of my early-conceived friendship. I took the picture in one hand, and in the other the purse, to which I was so little entitled. I put my best leg foremost in my way to Laura, muttering to myself in the transports of excessive joy: Good! the prophecy is accomplished in the twinkling of an eye. What a windfall to be the brother of a girl so full of beauty and attraction! It is a pity the credit attached to the relationship is not commensurate with the lucre and the comfort.

Laura, unlike most women in her profession, had a habit of early rising. I caught her at her toilette, where, while waiting for her illustrious foreigner, she was engrafting on her natural beauty all the adventitious charms which the cosmetic art could supply. Lovely Estella, said I, on accosting her, thou absolute loadstone of the tramontanes, I may now sit down at table with my master, since he has honoured me with a commission which gives me that prerogative, and which I am just come to fulfil. He cannot have the pleasure of waiting on you this morning, as he had purposed; but to make you amends for the disappointment he will sup here this evening, and sends you his picture which to all appearance is enclosed in something more valuable than itself.

I put the box into her hand at once; and the lively sparkling of the brilliants which encompassed it made her eyes sparkle and her mouth water. She opened it out of mere curiosity, looked carelessly at the painting as people perform a duty for which they have little relish, then shut it, and once more fell greedily on the jewellery. Their beauty made her eloquent; and she said to me with the smile of a satirist—These are copies which those mercenary things called actresses value much more highly than originals.

I next acquainted her that the generous Portuguese, when giving me charge of the portrait, recommended it to my care by a purse of fifty pistoles. I beg you will accept of my congratulations, said she; this nobleman begins where it is even uncommon for others to leave off. It is to you, my divine creature, answered I, that this present is owing; the marquis only made it on the score of natural affection. I could be well pleased, replied she, that he were to make you a score such presents every day. I cannot express in what extravagance you are dear to me. From the first moment of our meeting, I became attached to you by so strong a tie, as time has not been able to dissolve. When I lost you at Madrid, I did not despair of finding you again; and yesterday, on your sudden appearance, I received you like a deodand. In a word, my friend, heaven has created us for one another. You shall be my husband, but we must get plenty of money in the first instance. I shall just send myself out to three or four silly fellows more, and then you may live like a gentleman on your means.

I thanked her in the most appropriate terms for such an instance of extreme condescension on my behalf, and we got insensibly into a conversation which lasted till noon. At that hour I withdrew, to go and give my master an account of the manner in which his present was received. Though Laura had given me no instructions thereupon, I was not remiss in composing a fine compliment on my way, with which I meant to launch out on her part; but it was just so much flash in the pan. For, when I got home the marquis was gone out; and the fates had decreed that I should never see him more, for reasons which will be methodically stated in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER XI

A THUNDERBOLT TO GIL BLAS

I REPAIRED to my inn, where meeting with two men o companionable talents, I dined and sat at table with them till the play began. We parted; they as their business and desire pointed them; and, for my own part, my bent was towards the theatre. It may be proper to observe by the way, that I had all possible reason to be in a good humour The conversation with my chance companions had been joyous in the extreme; the colour of my fortune was gay and animating; yet for all that I could not help giving way to melancholy, without either knowing why, or being able to reason myself out of it. It was doubtless a prophetic warning of the misfortune which threatened me.

As I entered the green-room, Melchior Zapata came up and told me in a low voice to follow him. He led me to an unfrequented part of the house, and opened his business thus—Worthy sir, I make it a point of conscience to give you a very serious warning. You are aware that the Marquis de Marialva had at first taken a fancy to Narcissa my wife; he had even gone so far as to fix a day for trying the relish of my rib, when that cockatrice Estella contrived to flyblow the bill of fare, and transfer the banquet to her own untainted charms. Judge then, whether an actress can be gulled instead of gulling, and preserve the sweetness of her temper. My wife has taken it deeply to heart, and there is no species of revenge to which she would not have recourse. A fine opportunity has offered Yesterday, if you recollect, all our supernumeraries were crowding together to see you. The deputy candle-snuffer told some of the inferior comedians that he recollected you perfectly well, and that you might be anything but Estella's brother.

This report, added Melchior, came to Narcissa's ears to day: she lost no time in questioning the author; and that grub of the inferior stood to the whole story. He says that he knew you as Arsenia's servant, when Estella waited on her at Madrid under the name of Laura. My wife, full of glee at this discovery, means to acquaint the Marqui

le Marialva with it, when he comes to the play this evening; o take your measures accordingly. If you are not Estella's orother in good earnest, I would advise you as a friend, nd on the score of old acquaintance, to make your escape while your skin is whole. Narcissa, satisfied in her tender nercy with only one victim, and that of her own sex, nas allowed me to give you this notice, that you may outrun your ill luck.

It would have been waste of words to press the subject rarther. I returned thanks for the caution to this fretter of his hour, who saw by my terrified aspect that I was not the nan to give the deputy candle-snuffer the lie. I did not eel the least temptation to carry my dangerous valour such length. I had not even the heart to go and bid farewell o Laura, for fear she should insist on me keeping up the rarce. I could easily conceive that so excellent an actress night get out of the scrape with flying colours; but there eemed to be nothing for me short of a swinging castigation; nd I was not so far gone in love as to stand by my sweetheart at the risk of my own person. I thought of nothing ut a precipitate retreat with my household gods, or rather oods, if such a trumpery collection of individual property night be called so. I disappeared from the playhouse in the winkling of an eye, and in less time than it would have taken to confess my sins, was my portmanteau carried off nd safely lodged with a muleteer who was to set out for oledo at three o'clock next morning. I could have wished myself already with the Count de Polan, whose hospitable oof seemed my only safe asylum. But I was not there et; and it was impossible to think without dread of the ime remaining to be passed in a town where I was afraid hey would hunt me out without giving me a night's law.

The smell of supper drew me to my inn notwithstanding; hough I was as uneasy as a debtor who knows that a writ s out against him. My stomach, I believe, was not sufficiently well knit that evening for my supper to play its part s it should do. The miserable sport of fear, I watched all he people who came into the coffee-room, and whenever y chance they carried a gallows in their physiognomy, which is no uncommon ensign in such places of resort, I huddered with horrid forebodings. After having supped he supper of the damned, I got up from table and returned

to my carrier's house, where I threw myself on some clean straw till it was time to set out.

My patience was well tried during that interval; for a thousand unpleasant thoughts attacked me in all directions. If I dozed now and then, the enraged marquis stood before me, pounding Laura's fair face to a jelly with his fist and turning her whole house out at window; or to come nearer home, I heard him giving directions for my death under the operation of a cudgel. At such a vision I started out of my sleep, and waking, which is usually so pleasant after a frightful dream, inspired me with more horror than even the fictions of my entranced fancy.

Happily the muleteer delivered me from so dire a purgatory, by coming to acquaint me that his mules were ready. I was immediately on my legs, and set out radically cured, for which heaven has my best thanks, of Laura and the occult sciences. As we got farther from Grenada my mind recovered its tone. I began chatting with the muleteer, laughed at his droll stories, and insensibly lost all my apprehensions. I slept undisturbed at Ubeda, where we lay the first night, and on the fourth day we got to Toledo. My first care was to inform myself of the Count de Polan's residence, whither I repaired under the full persuasion that he would not suffer me to lodge elsewhere. But I reckoned without my host. There was no one at home but a person to take care of the house, who told me that his master was just gone to the castle of Leyva, having been sent for on account of Seraphina's dangerous illness.

The count's absence was altogether unexpected: here was no longer any inducement to stay at Toledo, and all my plans were changed at once. Finding myself so near Madrid, I resolved to go thither. It came into my head that I might make my way at court, where talents of the first order, as I had heard, were not absolutely necessary to fill situations of the first consequence. On the very next morning I took advantage of back carriage, to be set down in the renowned capital of Spain. Fortune took me kindly by the hand, and introduced me to a higher cast of parts than those I had hitherto filled.

CHAPTER XII

GIL BLAS TAKES LODGINGS IN A READY-FURNISHED HOUSE. HE GETS ACQUAINTED WITH CAPTAIN CHINCHILLA. THAT OFFICER'S CHARACTER AND BUSINESS AT MADRID

ON my first arrival at Madrid, I fixed my head-quarters in a lodging-house, where resided, among other persons, an old captain, who was come from the distant part of New Castile, to solicit a pension at court, and he thought his claims but too well founded. His name was Don Annibal de Chinchilla. It was not without much staring that I saw him for the first time. He was a man about sixty, of gigantic stature, and of anatomical leanness. His whiskers were like brushwood, fencing off the two sides of his face as high as his temples. Besides that, he was short in his reckoning by an arm and a leg, there was a vacancy for an eye, which Polypheme would have supplied as he did, had patches of green silk been then in the fashion; and his features were hacked sufficiently to illustrate a treatise of geometry. With these exceptions, his configuration was much like that of another man. As to his mental qualities, he was not altogether without understanding; and what he wanted in quickness he made up by gravity. His principles were rigid in the extreme; and it was his particular boast to be delicate on the point of honour.

After two or three interviews, he distinguished me by his confidence. I soon got into all his personal history: he related on what occasions he had left an eye at Naples, an arm in Lombardy, and a leg in the Low Countries. The most admirable circumstance in all his narratives of battles and sieges, was, that not a single feature of the swaggerer peeped out; not a word escaped him to his own honour and glory; though one could readily have forgiven him for making some little display of the half which was still extant of himself, as a set-off against the dilapidations which had deducted so largely from the usual contexture of a man. Officers who return from their campaigns without a scratch upon their skin or a love-lock out of place, are not always so humble in their pretensions.

But he told me that what gave him most uneasiness

was, the having wasted a considerable portion of his pr vate fortune on military objects, so that he had not mo than a hundred ducats a year left; a poor establishmer for such a pair of whiskers, a gentleman's lodging, and a amanuensis to multiply memorials by wholesale. For i point of fact, my worthy friend, added he, shrugging hi shoulders, I present one, with a blessing on my endea vours, every day, and the last meets with the same atter tion as the first. You would say that it was an even be between the prime minister and me, which of us two sha be tired first; the memorialist or the receiver of the memo rials. I have often had the honour, too, of addressing th king on the same subject; but the rector and his curat say grace in the same key; and in the mean time, my castl of Chinchilla is falling to ruin for want of necessary re pairs.

Faint heart never won fair lady, said I most wisely t the captain; you are perhaps on the eve of finding all you marches and countermarches repaid with usury. I mus not flatter myself with that pleasing expectation, an swered Don Annibal. It is but three days since I spok to one of the minister's secretaries; and if I am to trus his representations, I have only to hold up my head an look big. What then did he say to you? replied I. Ha those poor dumb mouths your wounds no eloquence, t wring a hireling pittance for their profuse expense o blood? You shall judge for yourself, resumed Chinchilla This secretary told me in good plain terms: My hones friend, you need not boast so much of your zeal and you fidelity; you have only done your duty in exposing yoursel to danger for your country. Naked glory is the true an honourable recompense of gallant actions, and as such i the prize at which a Spaniard aims. You therefore argu on false principles, if you consider the bounty you solici as a debt. In case it should be granted, you will owe tha favour exclusively to the royal goodness, which in its ex treme condescension requites those of its subjects wh have served the state valiantly. Thus you see, pursue the captain, that if I had a hundred lives they are al pledged, and that I am likely to go back as hungry as came.

A brave man in distress is the most touching object i

nis world. I exhorted him to stick close, and offered to rite his memorials out fair for nothing. I even went so ır as to open my purse to him, and to beg it as a favour nat he would draw upon me for whatever he wanted. ut he was not one of those folks who never wait to be sked twice on such occasions. So much the reverse, that tith a commendable delicacy on the subject, he thanked e for my kindness, but refused it peremptorily. He afterards told me that, for fear of spunging upon any one, he ad accustomed himself, by little and little, to live with ich sobriety, that the smallest quantity of food was sufcient for his subsistence; which was but too true. His aily fare was confined to vegetables, by dint whereof his mponent parts were confined to skin and bone. That e might have no witnesses how ill he dined, he usually ut himself up in his chamber at that meal. I prevailed far with him, however, by repeated entreaties, as to btain that we should dine and sup together: then, underining his pride by little indirect artifices of compassion, ordered more provision and wine than I could consume my own share. I pressed him to eat and drink. At st he made difficulties about it; but in the end there as no resisting my hospitality. After a time, his modesty coming fainter as his diet was more flush, he helped me f with my dinner and lightened my bottle almost with-ıt asking.

One day, after four or five glasses, when his stomach had newed its intimacy with a more generous system of eding, he said to me with an air of gaiety: Upon my ord, Signor Gil Blas, you have very winning ways with ou; you make me do just whatever you please. There s something so hearty in your welcome as to relieve me m all fear of trespassing on your generous temper. My ptain seemed at that moment so entirely to have got rid his bashfulness, that if I had been in the humour to ve seized the lucky moment, and to have pressed my rse once more on his acceptance, I am much mistaken he would have refused it. I did not put him to the al; but rested satisfied with having made him my messate, and taken the trouble not only to copy out his emorials, but to assist him in their composition. By nt of having written homilies out fair, I had learnt the

knack of phraseology, and was become a sort of autho
The old officer on his side had some little vanity abou
writing well. Both of us thus contending for the priz
the bursts of eloquence would have done honour to th
most celebrated professors of Salamanca. But it was i
vain that we sat on opposite sides of the table, and draine
our genius to the very dregs, to nourish the flowers o
rhetoric in these memorials; you might as well have plante
an orange-grove on the sea-beach. In whatever new ligh
we placed Don Annibal's services, it was all the same a
court, the connoisseurs were decided about their merit; s
that the battered veteran had no reason to sing the praise
of that spirit which leads officers on to spend their famil
estates in the service. In the virulence of his spleen h
cursed the planet under which he was born, and sen
Naples, Lombardy, and the Low Countries to th
devil.

That his mortification might be pressed down and run
ning over, it happened to his face one day that a poet, intro
duced by the Duke of Alva, having recited a sonnet befor
the king on the birth of an infanta, was gratified with
pension of five hundred ducats. I believe the lop-limbe
captain would have gone raving mad at it, if I had no
taken some pains to recompense his spirit. What is th
matter with you? said I, seeing him quite beside himself
There is nothing in all this which ought to go so terribly
against the grain. Ever since Mount Parnassus swelle
above the subject plain, have not poets pleaded the privi
lege of laying princes under contribution to their muse
There is not a crowned head in Christendom that has no
substituted a pensioned laureate for the household foo
of less refined times. And between ourselves, this specie
of patronage, for the most part galloping down full driv
to posterity on the saddle of Pegasus, raises a hue and cr
in honour of royal munificence; but bounty to person
who are lost in the crowd, however deserving, adds nothin
to the bulk or stature of posthumous renown. Augustu
must have drained his treasury by gratuities, and ye
how few of the names on his pension-list have come dow
to us! But distant ages shall be informed, as we are, i
all the hyperbole of poetic diction, that his benefit
descended on Virgil like the rain from heaven, whose drop

rithmetic has no combinations to count, no principles by which to reason on their number.

But let me talk ever so classically to Don Annibal, there was a confounded acidity in that sonnet which curdled ll the milky ingredients of his moral composition; it was mpossible to chew, swallow, and digest such food with uman organs; and he was fully determined to give the natter up at once. It seemed right, nevertheless, by way f playing for his last stake, to present one more memorial o the Duke of Lerma, and if that failed there was an end f the game. For this purpose we went together to the rime minister's. There we met a young man who, after aluting the captain, said to him in a tone of affection: ly old and dear master, is it your own self that I see? What business brings you to this mart of favour? If you ave occasion for any one to speak a good word for you, o not spare my lungs; they are entirely at your service. low is this, Pedrillo? answered the officer; to hear you alk it should seem as if you held some important post in is house. At least, replied the young man, I have fluence enough here to put an honest rustic like you to the right train. That being the case, resumed the cap- ain with a smile, I place myself under your protection. accept the pledge, rejoined Pedrillo. You have only to cquaint me with your particular taste, and I engage to ive you a savoury slice out of the ministerial pasty.

We had no sooner opened our minds to this young ellow, so full of kind assurances, than he inquired where on Annibal resided; then, promising that we should hear om him on the following day, he vanished without inform- ng us what he meant to do, or even telling us whether he elonged to the Duke of Lerma's household. I was curious o know what this Pedrillo was, whose turn of mind ap- eared to be so brisk and active. He is a brave lad, said he captain, who waited on me some years ago, but find- g me out at elbows, went away in search of a better ser- ice. There was no offence to me in all that; it is very atural to change when one cannot be worse off. The reature is pleasant enough, not deficient in parts, and appy in a spirit of intrigue which would wheedle with he devil. But notwithstanding all his fine pretence, I m not sanguine in my reckoning on the zeal he has just

testified for me. Perhaps, said I, there may be some plausibility in his designs. Should he be a retainer, for example, to any of the duke's principal officers, it will be in his power to serve you. You have lived too long in the world not to know that in great houses everything is done by party and cabal; that the masters are governed by two or three upper servants about their persons, who in their turn, are governed by that multitude of menials attendant upon them.

On the next morning we saw Pedrillo at our breakfast table. Gentlemen, said he, if I did not explain myself yesterday as to my means of serving Captain Chinchilla it was because we were not in a place where such a communication could be made with safety. Besides, I was disposed to ascertain whether the thing was feasible, before you were made parties in it. Understand, then, that I am the confidential servant of Signor Don Rodrigo de Calderona, the Duke of Lerma's first secretary. My master, who is much addicted to women, goes almost every evening to sup with a little Arragonian nightingale whom he keeps in a cage near the purlieus of the court. She is quite a young girl from Albarazin, a most lovely creature. She has some wit as well as beauty, and sings enchantingly; they call her the Spanish Syren. I am the bearer of some tender inquiries every morning, and am just come from her. I have proposed to her to pass off Signor Don Annibal for her uncle, and the object of the forgery is to engage her lover in his interests. She is very willing to lend her aid in the business. Besides some little commission to which she looks forward on the profits, it will tickle her vanity to be taken for the niece of a military man.

Signor de Chinchilla looked very grim at this suggestion. He declared his extreme abhorrence of becoming a party concerned in a mere swindling trick, and still more of adopting a female adventurer, no better than she should be, into his family, and thus casting a stain upon its immaculate purity. It was not only for himself that he felt all this soreness; there was a recoil of ignominy on his ancestors, which would lay their honours level with the dust. This morbid delicacy seemed out of season to Pedrillo, who could not help expressing his contempt of

t thus. You must surely be out of your wits to take the natter up on that footing. A fine market you bring your norals to, you dictators from the plough, with your ridi-ulous squeamishness! Now you seem a good sensible nan, appealing to me as he spoke these last words. Can rou believe your ears when you hear such scruples ad-anced? Heaven defend us! At court, of all the places in he world, to look at morals through a microscope! Let ortune come under what haggard form she may, they hug ier in their arms, and swear she is a beauty.

My way of thinking was precisely with Pedrillo; and ve dinned it so stoutly into both the captain's ears, as to nake him the Spanish Syren's uncle against nature and nclination. When we had so far prevailed over his pride, ve all three set about drawing up a new memorial for the ninister, which was revised, with a copious interlacing f additions and corrections. I then wrote it out fair, nd Pedrillo carried it to the Arragonian chauntress, who nat very evening put it into the hands of Signor Don odrigo, telling her story so artlessly that the secretary, eally supposing her the captain's niece, promised to take p his case. A few days afterwards we reaped the fruits f our little project. Pedrillo came back to our house with ne lofty air of a benefactor. Good news, said he to Chin-illa. The king is going to make a new grant of officers, laces, and pensions; nor will your name be forgotten in ne list. But I am specially commissioned to inquire what resent you purpose making to the Spanish Syren, for the per must be paid. As to myself, I vow and protest that will not take a farthing; the pleasure of having contri-uted to patch up my old master's broken fortunes, is ore to me than all the ingots of the Indies. But it is not recisely so with our nymph of Albarazin: she has a little ewish blood to plead, when the Christian precept of iving your neighbour as herself is preached up to her. ne would pick her own natural father's pocket; so judge ou whether she would be above making a bargain with a avelling uncle.

She has only to name her own terms, answered Don nnibal. Whatever my pension may be, she shall have e third of it annually if she pleases; I will pledge my ord for it; and that proportion ought to satisfy her

craving, if his Catholic Majesty had settled his whole exchequer on me. I would as soon take your word as your bond, for my own part, replied the nimble-footed messenger of Don Rodrigo; I know that it will stand the assay; but you have to deal with a little creature who knows herself, and naturally supposes that she knows all the rest of the world by the same token. Besides, she would like better to take it in the lump; two-thirds to be paid down now in ready money. Why, how the devil does she mean that I should get the wherewithal? bawled the captain in a quandary. Does she take me for an auditor of public accounts, or treasurer to a charity? You cannot have made her acquainted with my circumstances. Yes, but I have, replied Pedrillo; she knows very well that you are poorer than Job; after what she has heard from me she could think no otherwise. But do not make yourself uneasy, my brain is never at a loss for an expedient. I know an old scoundrel of an usurer, who will take ten per cent. if he can get no more. You must assign your first year's pension to him, in acknowledgment for a like valuable consideration from him, which you will in point of fact receive, only deducting the above-mentioned interest. As to security, the lender will take your castle at Chinchilla for want of better; there will be no dispute about that.

The captain declared his readiness to accept the terms in case of his being so fortunate as to possess any beneficial interest in the good things to be given away the next morning. It happened accordingly. He got a government with a pension of three hundred pistoles. As soon as the news came, he signed and sealed as required, settled his little concerns in town, and went off again for New Castile with a balance of some few pistoles in his favour.

CHAPTER XIII

GIL BLAS COMES ACROSS HIS DEAR FRIEND FABRICIO AT COURT. GREAT ECSTASY ON BOTH SIDES. THEY ADJOURN TOGETHER, AND COMPARE NOTES; BUT THEIR CONVERSATION IS TOO CURIOUS TO BE ANTICIPATED

I HAD contracted a habit of going to the royal palace every morning, where I lounged away two or three good hours in seeing the good people pass to and fro; but their aspect was less imposing there than in other places, as the lesser stars turn pale in the presence of the sun.

One day as I was walking back and fore, and strutting about the apartments, making about as wise a figure there as my neighbours, I spied out Fabricio, whom I had left at Valladolid in the service of a hospital director. It surprised me not a little that he was chatting familiarly with the Duke of Medina Sidonia and the Marquis of Santa Cruz. Those two noblemen, if my senses did not deceive me, were listening with admiration to his prattle. To crown the whole, he was as handsomely dressed as a grandee.

Surely I must be mistaken! thought I. Can this possibly be the son of Nunez the barber? More likely it is some young courtier who bears a strong resemblance to him. But my suspense was of no long duration. The party broke up, and I accosted Fabricio. He knew me at once; took me by the hand, and after pressing through the crowd to get out of the precincts, said with a hearty greeting, My dear Gil Blas, I am delighted to see you again. What are you doing at Madrid? Are you still at service? Some place about the court perhaps? How do matters stand with you? Let me into the history of all that has happened to you since your precipitate flight from Valladolid. You ask a great many questions in a breath, replied I; and we are not in a fit place for storytelling. You are in the right, answered he; we shall be better at home. Come, I will shew you the way; it is not far hence. I am quite my own master, with all my comforts about me; perfectly easy as to the main chance, with

a light heart and a happy temper; because I am determined to see everything on the bright side.

I accepted the proposal, and Fabricio escorted me. We stopped at a house of magnificent appearance, where he told me that he lived. There was a court to cross; on one side it had a grand staircase leading to a suite of state apartments, and on the other a small flight, dark and narrow, whither we betook ourselves to a residence elevated in a different sense from what he had boasted. It consisted of a single room, which my contriving friend had divided into four by deal partitions. The first served as an antechamber to the second, where he lay: of the third he made his closet, of the last his kitchen. The chamber and antechamber were papered with maps, and many a sheet of philosophical discussion; nor was the furniture by any means unsuitable to the hangings. There was a large brocade bed much the worse for wear; tawdry old chairs with coarse yellow coverings, fringed with Grenada silk of the same colour, a table with gilt feet, and a cloth over it that once aspired to be red, bordered with tinsel and embroidery tarnished by that old corroder, time; with an ebony cabinet, ornamented with figures in a clumsy taste of sculpture. Instead of a convenient desk, he had a small table in his closet; and his library was made up with some few books, and a great many bundles of paper arranged on shelves one above the other the whole length of the wall. His kitchen, too modest to put the rest of the establishment out of countenance, exhibited a frugal assortment of earthenware and other necessary implements of cookery.

Fabricio, when he had allowed me leisure to philosophize on his domestic arrangements, begged to know my opinion of his apartments and his housekeeping, and whether I was not enchanted with them: Yes, beyond all manner of doubt, answered I with a roguish smile. You must have applied your wits to a good purpose at Madrid, to have got so well accoutred. Of course you have some post. Heaven preserve me from anything of the sort! replied he. My line of life is far above all political situations. A man of rank, to whom this house belongs, has given me a room in it, whence I have contrived to piece out a suite of four, fitted up in such taste as you may see. I devote my time to no employments but what are just to my fancy,

and never feel what it is to want. Explain yourself more intelligibly, said I, interrupting him. You set me all agog to be let into your little arrangements. Well, then! said he, I will rid you of that devil curiosity at once. I have commenced author, have plunged headlong into the ocean of literature; verse and prose run equally glib; in short I am a jack of all trades to the muses.

What! you bound in solemn league and covenant to Apollo? exclaimed I with most intolerable laughter. Nothing under a prophet could ever have anticipated this. I should have been less surprised at any other transformation. What possible delights have you had the ingenuity to detect in the rugged landscape of Parnassus? It should seem as if the labourers there have a very poor taking in civil life, and feed on a coarse diet without sauce. Out upon you! cried he, in dudgeon at the hint. You are talking of those paltry authors, whose works and even their persons are under the thumb of booksellers and players. Is it any wonder that writers under such circumstances should be held cheap? But the good ones, my friend, are on a better footing in the world; and I think it may be affirmed, vanity apart, that my name is to be found in their list. Questionless, said I, talents like yours are convertible to every purpose; compositions from such a pen are not likely to be insipid. But I am on the rack to know how this rage for fencing with inky weapons could have seized thee.

Your wonder and alarm has mind in it, replied Nunez. I was so well pleased with my situation in the service of Signor Manuel Ordonnez that I had no hankering after any other. But my genius, like that of Plautus, being too high-minded to contract itself within the sphere of menial occupations, I wrote a play and got it acted by a company then performing at Valladolid. Though it was not worth the paper it was scrawled upon, it had more success than many better pieces. Hence concluded I that the public was a silly bird, and would hatch any eggs that were put under it. That modest discovery, with the consequent madness of incessant composition, alienated my affections from the hospital. The love of poetry being stronger than the desire of accumulation, I determined on repairing to Madrid, as the centre of every-

thing distinguished, to form my taste in that school. The first thing was to give the governor warning, who parted with me to his own great sorrow, from a sort of affection the result of similar propensities. Fabricio, said he, what possible ground can you have for discontent? None at all, sir, I replied; you are the best of all possible masters, and I am deeply impressed with your kind treatment; but you know one must follow whithersoever the stars ordain. I feel the sacred fire within me, on whose aspiring element my name is to be wafted to posterity. What confounded nonsense! rejoined the old fellow, whose ideas were all pecuniary. You are already become a fixture in the hospital, and are made of a metal which may easily be manufactured into a steward, or by good-luck even into a governor. You are going to give up the great object of life, and to flutter about its frippery. So much the worse for you, honest friend!

The governor, seeing how fruitless it was to struggle with my fixed resolve, paid me my wages, and made me a present of fifty ducats as an acknowledgment of my services. Thus, between this supply and what I have been able to scrape together out of some little commissions, which were assigned to me from an opinion of my disinterestedness, I was in circumstances to make a very pretty appearance on my arrival at Madrid; which I was not negligent in doing, though the literary tribe in our country are not over-punctilious about decency or cleanliness. I soon got acquainted with Lope de Vega, Cervantes, and the whole set of them; but though they were fine fellows, and thought so by the public, I chose for my model in preference, Don Lewis de Gongora, the incomparable, a young bachelor of Cordova, decidedly the first genius that ever Spain produced. He will not suffer his works to be printed during his life-time; but confines himself to a private communication among his friends. What is very remarkable, nature has gifted him with the uncommon talent of succeeding in every department of poetry. His principal excellence is in satire; there he outshines himself. He does not resemble, like Lucilius, a muddy stream with a slimy bottom; but is rather like the Tagus, rolling its transparent waters over a golden sand.

You give a fine description of this bachelor, said I to

Fabricio; and questionless a character of such merit must have attracted an infinite deal of envy. The whole gang of authors, answered he, good and bad equally, are open-mouthed against him. He deals in bombast, says one; aims at double meanings, luxuriates in metaphor, and affects transposition. His verses, says another, have all the obscurity of those which the Salian priests used to chaunt in their processions, and which nobody was the wiser for hearing. There are others who impute it to him as a fault, to have exercised his genius at one time in sonnets or ballads, at another in play-writing, in heroic stanzas, and in minor efforts of wit alternately, as if he had madly taken upon himself to eclipse the best writers each in their own favourite walk. But all these thrusts of jealousy are successfully parried, where the muse, which is their mark, becomes the idol of the great and of the multitude at once.

Under so able a master did I serve my apprenticeship; and, vanity apart, the preceptor was reflected in the disciple. So happily did I catch his spirit, that by this time he would not be ashamed to own some of my detached pieces. After his example, I carry my goods to market at great houses where the bidding is eager, and the sagacity of the bidders not difficult to match. It is true that I have a very insinuating talent at recitation; which places my compositions in no disadvantageous light. In short, I am the dear delight of the nobility, and live in the most particular intimacy with the Duke of Medina Sidonia, just as Horace used to live with his jolly companion Mecenas. By such conjuration and mighty magic have I won the name of author. You see the method lies within a narrow compass. Now, Gil Blas, it is your turn to deliver a round unvarnished tale of your exploits.

On this hint I spake; and unlike most narrators, gave all the important particulars, passing lightly over minute and tiresome circumstances. The action of talking, long continued, puts one in mind of dining. His ebony cabinet, which served for larder, pantry, and all possible uses, was ransacked for napkins, bread, a shoulder of mutton far gone in a decline, with its last and best contents, a bottle of excellent wine; so that we sat down to table in high spirits, as friends are wont to do after a long separation. You observe, said he, this free and independent manner of

life. I might find a plate laid for me every day, if I chose it, in the very first houses; but, besides that the muse often pays me a visit and detains me within doors, I have a little of Aristippus in my nature. I can pass with equal relish from the great and busy world to my retreat, from all the researches of luxury to the simplicity of my own frugal board.

The wine was so good, that we encroached upon a second bottle. As a relish to our fruit and cheese, I begged to be favoured with a sight of something, the offspring of his inspired moments. He immediately rummaged among his papers, and read me a sonnet with much energy of tone. Yet, with all the advantage of accent and expression, there was something so uncouth in the arrangement, as to baffle all conjecture about the meaning. He saw how it puzzled me. This sonnet then, said he, is not quite level to your comprehension! Is not that the fact? I owned that I should have preferred a construction somewhat less forced. He began laughing at my rusticity. Well, then! replied he; we will say that this sonnet would confuse clearer heads than thine: it is all the better for that. Sonnets, odes, in short all compositions which partake of the sublime, are of course the reverse of the simple and natural: they are enveloped in clouds, and their darkness constitutes their grandeur. Let the poet only fancy that he understands himself no matter whether his readers understand him or not. You are laughing at me, my friend, said I, interrupting him. Let poetry be of what species it may, good sense and intelligible diction are essential to its powers of pleasing. If your peerless Gongora is not a little more lucid than yourself, I protest that his merit will never pass current with me. Such poets may entrap their own age into applause, but will never live beyond it. Now let me have a taste of your prose.

Nunez shewed me a preface which he meant to prefix to a dramatic miscellany then in the press. He insisted on having my opinion. I like not your prose one atom better than your verse, said I. Your sonnet is a roaring deluge of emptiness; and as for your preface, it is disfigured by a phraseology stolen from languages yet in embryo, by words not stamped in the mint of general use, by all the perplexity of a style that does not know what to make

of itself. In a word, the composition is altogether a thing of your own. Our classical and standard books are written in a very different manner. Poor tasteless wretch! exclaimed Fabricio. You are not aware that every prose writer who aspires to the reputation of sentiment and delicacy in these days, affects this style of his own, these perplexities and innovations which are a stumbling-block to you. There are five or six of us determined reformers of our language, who have undertaken to turn the Spanish idiom topsy-turvy; and with a blessing on our endeavours, we will pull it down and build it up again in defiance of Lope de Vega, Cervantes, and all the host of wits who cavil at our new modes of speech. Our party is strongly supported in the fashionable world, and we have laid violent hands upon the pulpit.

After all, continued he, our project is commendable; for, to speak without prejudice, we have ten times the merit of those natural writers, who express themselves just like the mob. I cannot conceive why so many sensible men are taken with them. It is all very well at Athens and at Rome, in a wild and undistinguishing democracy; and on that principle only could Socrates tell Alcibiades, that the last appeal was to the people in all disputes about language. But at Madrid there is a polite and a vulgar usage; so that our courtiers talk in a different tongue from their tradesmen. You may assure yourself that it is so; in fine, this newly invented style is carrying everything before it, and turning old nature out of doors. Now I will explain to you by a single instance the difference between the elegance of our diction and the flatness of theirs. They would say, for example, in plain terms, "Ballets incidental to the piece are an ornament to a play;" but in our mode of expression, we say more exquisitely, "Ballets incidental to the piece are the very life and soul of the play." Now observe the phrase; *life and soul.* Are you sensible how glowing it is, at the same time how descriptive, setting before you all the motions of the dancers, as on an intellectual stage?

I broke in upon my reformer of language with a burst of laughter. Get along with you, Fabricio, said I, you are a coxcomb of your own manufacture, with your affected finery of phrase. And you, answered he, are a blockhead

of nature's clumsy moulding, with your starch simplicity. He then went on taunting me with the archbishop of Grenada's angry banter on my dismission. "Get about your business! Go and tell my treasurer to pay you a hundred ducats, and take my blessing in addition to that sum. God speed you, good master Gil Blas! I heartily pray that you may do well in the world! There is nothing to stand in your way, but a little better taste." I roared out in a still louder explosion of laughter at this lucky hit; and Fabricio, easily appeased on the score of impiety, as manifested in the opinion expressed concerning his writings lost nothing of his pleasant and propitious temper. We got to the bottom of our second bottle; and then rose from the table in fine order for an adventure. Our first intention was to see what was to be seen upon the Prado; but passing in front of a liquor-shop, it came into our heads that we might as well go in.

The company was in general tolerably select at this house of call. There were two distinct apartments; and the pastime in each was of a very opposite nature. One was devoted to games of chance or skill; the other to literary and scientific discussion: and there were at that moment two clever men by profession handling an argument most pertinaciously, before ten or twelve auditors deeply interested in the discussion. There was no occasion to join the circle, because the metaphysical thunder of their logic made itself heard at a more respectful distance: the heat and passion with which this abstract controversy was managed made the two philosophers look little better than madmen. A certain Eleazar used to cast out devils, by tying a ring to the nose of the possessed; had these learned swine been ringed in the same manner, how many little imps would have taken wing out of their nostrils? Angels and ministers of grace defend us, said I to my companion: what contortions of gesture, what extravagance of elocution! One might as well argue with the town crier. How little do we know our natural calling in society! Very true indeed, answered he: you have read of Novius, the Roman pawnbroker, whose lungs went as far beyond the rattle of chariot-wheels, as his conscience beyond the rate of legal interest; the Novii must certainly have been transplanted into Spain, and

these fellows are lineal descendants. But the hopeless part of the case is, that though our organs of sense are deafened, our understandings are not invigorated at their expense. We thought it best to make our escape from these braying metaphysicians, and by that prudent motion to avoid a headache which was just beginning to annoy us. We went and seated ourselves in a corner of the other room, whence, as we sipped our refreshing beverage, all comers and goers were obnoxious to our criticism. Nunez was acquainted with almost the whole set. Heaven and earth! exclaimed he, the clash of philosophy is as yet but in its beginning; fresh reinforcements are coming in on both sides. Those three men just on the threshold, mean to let slip the dogs of war. But do you see those two queer fellows going out? That little swarthy, leather-complexioned Adonis, with long lank hair parted in the middle with mathematical exactness, is Don Juliano de Villanuno. He is a young barrister, with more of the prig than the lawyer about him. A party of us went to dine with him the other day. The occupation we caught him in was singular enough. He was amusing himself in his office with making a tall grey-hound fetch and carry the briefs in the causes which were so unfortunate as to have him retained; and of course the canine *amicus curiæ* set his fangs indifferently into the flesh of plaintiff or defendant, tearing law, equity, precedent, and principle into shreds. That licentiate at his elbow, with jolly, pimple-spangled nose and cheeks, goes by the name of Don Cherubino Tonto. He is a canon of Toledo, and the greatest fool that was ever suffered to walk the earth without a keeper. And yet, he arrays his features in that sort of not quite unmeaning smile, that you would give him credit for good sense as well as good humour. His eye has the look of cunning if not of wisdom, and his laugh too much of sarcasm for an absolute idiot. One would conclude that he had a turn for mischief, but kept it down from principle and feeling. If you wish to take his opinion upon a work of genius, he will hear it read with so grave and wrapt a silence, as nothing but deep thought and acute mental criticism could justify; but the truth is, that he comprehends not one word, and therefore can have nothing to say. He was of the barrister party. There were a thousand good things said, as there always must

be in a professional company. Don Cherubino added nothing to the mass of merriment; but looked such perfect approbation at those who did, was so tractable and complimentary a listener, that every man at table placed him second in the comparative estimate of merit.

Do you know, said I to Nunez, who those two fellows are with dirty clothes and matted hair, their elbows on that table in the corner, and their cheeks upon their hands, whiffing foul breath into each other's nostrils as they lay their heads together? He told me that by their faces they were strangers to him; but that by physical and moral tokens they could only be coffee-house politicians, venting their spleen against the measures of government. But do look at that spruce spark, whistling as he paces up and down the other room, and balancing himself alternately on one toe and on the other. That is Don Augustino Moreto, a young poet sufficiently of nature's mint and coinage to pass current, if flatterers and sciolists had not debased him into a mere coxcomb by their misplaced admiration. The man to whom he is going up with that familiar shake by the hand, is one of the set who write verses and then call themselves poets; who claim a speaking acquaintance with the muses, but never were of their private parties.

Authors upon authors, nothing but authors! exclaimed he, pointing out two dashing blades. One would think they had made an appointment on purpose to pass in review before you. Don Bernardo Deslenguado and Don Sebastian of Villa Viciosa! The first is a vinegar-flavoured vintage of Parnassus, a satirist by trade and company; he hates all the world, and is not liked the better for his taste. As for Don Sebastian, he is the milk and honey of criticism; he would not have the guilt of ill-nature on his conscience for the universe. He has just brought out a comedy without a single idea, which has succeeded with an audience of tantamount ideas; and he has just now published it to vindicate his innocence.

Gongora's candid pupil was running on in his career of benevolent explanation, when one of the Duke de Medina Sidonia's household came up and said: Signor Don Fabricio, my lord duke wishes to speak with you. You will find him at home. Nunez, who knew that the wishes of a great lord could not be too soon gratified, left me without

ceremony; but he left me in the utmost consternation, to hear him called Don, and thus ennobled, in spite of master Chrysostom the barber's escutcheon, who had the honour to call him father.

CHAPTER XIV

FABRICIO FINDS A SITUATION FOR GIL BLAS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COUNT GALIANO, A SICILIAN NOBLEMAN

I was too happy in Fabricio's society, not to hunt him out again early the next morning. Good day to you, Signior Don Fabricio, said I on my first approach; it seems you are the picked and chosen flower, or rather, saving your presence, the nondescript excrescence of the Asturian nobility. This sarcasm had no other effect than to set him laughing heartily. Then the title of Don was not lost upon you! exclaimed he. No, indeed, my noble lord, answered I; and you will give me leave to tell you that when you were recounting your transformations to me yesterday, you forgot the most extraordinary. Exactly so, replied he; but to speak sincerely, if I have taken up that prefix of dignity, it is less to tickle my own vanity, than in tenderness to that of others. You know what stuff the Spaniards are made of; an honest man is no honest man to them, if his honour is not bolstered up with escutcheons, pedigree, and patrimony. I may tell you, moreover, that there are so many gentry, and very queer sort of gentry too, dubbed Don Francisco, Don Pedro, Don What-do-you-call-him, or Don Devil, that if they owe their coats of arms to any herald but their own impudence, modern nobility is a mere drug in the market, so that a plebeian of nature's ennobling confers infinite honour on the upstarts of an artificial creation, by herding with their order.

But let us change the subject, added he. Last night, supping at the Duke de Medina Sidonia's, where among other company we had Count Galiano, a great Sicilian nobleman, the conversation turned upon the ridiculous effects of self-love. Delighted at having a case in point

by way of illustration, I treated them with the story of the homilies. You may well suppose that there was a hearty laugh, and that the archbishop's dignity was not saved in the concussion; but the effect was not amiss for you, since the company felt for your situation; and Count Galiano, after a long string of questions, which of course I answered to your advantage, commissioned me to introduce you. I was just now going to look after you for that purpose. In all probability he means to offer you a situation as one of his secretaries. I advise you not to hang back. The count is rich, and lives away at Madrid, on the scale of an ambassador. He is said to have come to court on a negotiation with the Duke of Lerma, respecting some crown lands which that minister thinks of alienating in Sicily. In one word, Count Galiano, though a Sicilian, has every feature of generosity, fair dealing, and gentlemanly conduct. You cannot do better than get upon that nobleman's establishment. In all probability, the flattering prophecy respecting you at Grenada is to be fulfilled in his person.

It was my full determination, said I to Nunez, to take my swing about town and look at men and manners a little, before the harness was buckled on my back again; but you paint your Sicilian nobleman in colours which fascinate my imagination and change my purpose. I should like to close with him at once. You will do so very soon, replied he, or I am much deceived. We sallied forth together immediately, and went to the count's, who resided in the house of his friend, Don Sancho d'Avila, the latter being then in the country.

The court-yard was overrun with pages and footmen in rich and elegant liveries, while the ante-chamber was blockaded by esquires, gentlemen, and various officers of the household. They were all as fine as possible, but with so whimsical an assortment of features, that you might have taken them for a cluster of monkeys dressed up to satirize the Spanish fashions. Do what you will, there is a certain class of men and women in nature, whom no art can trick out into anything human.

At the very name of Don Fabricio, a lane was formed for my patron, and I followed in the rear. The count was in his dressing-gown, sitting on a sofa and taking his chocolate. We made our obeisance in the most respectful

manner; while an inclination of the head on his part, accompanied with a condescending smile, won my heart at once. It is very wonderful, and yet very common, how the most trifling notice from the great penetrates the very soul of those who are not accustomed to it! They must have behaved like fiends, before their behaviour will be complained of.

After taking his chocolate, he recreated himself with the humours of a large ape, which underwent the name of Cupid: why the ape was made a god, or the god likened to an ape, the parties concerned can best answer; the only point of resemblance seemed to be mischief. At all events, this hairy brat of the sylvan Venus had so gamboled himself into his master's good graces, had established such a character for wit and humour, that the life of society was extinguished in his absence. As for Nunez and myself, though we had a better turn for drollery, we were cunning enough to chime in with the prevailing taste. The Sicilian was highly delighted with this, and tore himself away for a moment from his favourite pastime, just to tell me: My friend, you have only to say whether you choose to be one of my secretaries. If the situation suits you, the salary is two hundred pistoles a year. If Don Fabricio gives you a character, that is enough. Yes, my lord, cried Nunez, I am not such a cowardly fellow as Plato, who introduced one of his friends to Dionysius the tyrant, and then was afraid to back his own recommendation. But I have no anxiety about being reproached on that head.

I thanked the poet of the Asturias with a low bow, for having so much better an opinion of me than Plato had of his friend. Then addressing my patron, I assured him of my zeal and fidelity. No sooner did this good nobleman perceive his proposal to be acceptable, than he rang for his steward, and after talking to him apart, said to me: Gil Blas, I will explain the nature of your post hereafter. Meanwhile, you have only to follow that right-hand man of mine; he has his orders how to bestow you. I immediately retreated, leaving Fabricio behind with the Count and Cupid.

The steward, who came from Messina, and proved by all his actions that he came thence, led the way to his own room, overwhelming me all the while with the kindness

of his reception. He sent for the tailor who lived upon the skirts of the household, and ordered him to make me out of hand a suit of equal magnificence with those of the principal officers. The tailor took my measure and withdrew. As to lodging, said the native of Messina, I know a room which will just suit you. But stay! Have you breakfasted? I answered in the negative. Oh! poor shamefaced youth, replied he, why did not you say so? Come this way: I will introduce you where, thank heaven, you have only to ask and have.

So saying, he led me down into the buttery, where we found the clerk of the kitchen, who was a Neapolitan, and of course a complete match for his neighbour on the other side of the water. It might be said of this pair that they were formed to meet by nature. This honest clerk of the kitchen was doing justice to his trade by cramming himself and five or six hangers-on with ham, tongue, sausages, and other savoury compositions, which, besides their own relish, possess the merit of engendering thirst: we made common cause with these jolly fellows, and helped them to toss off some of my lord the count's best wines. While these things were going on in the buttery, kindred exploits were performing in the kitchen. The cook too was regaling three or four tradesmen of his acquaintance, who liked good wine as well as ourselves, nor disdained to stuff their craws with meat pasties and game: the very scullions were at free quarters, and filched whatever they pleased. I fancied myself in a house given up to plunder; and yet what I saw was comparatively fair and honest. These little festivities were laughing matters; but the private transactions of the family were very serious.

CHAPTER XV

THE EMPLOYMENT OF GIL BLAS IN DON GALIANO'S HOUSEHOLD

I WENT away to fetch my moveables to my new residence. On my return the count was at table with several noblemen and the poet Nunez, who called about him as if perfectly at home, and took a principal share in the conver-

sation. Indeed, he never opened his lips without applause. So much for wit! with that commodity at market, a man may pay his way in any company.

It was my lot to dine with the gentlemen of the household, who were served nearly as well as their employer. After meal-time I withdrew to ruminate on my lot. So far so good, Gil Blas! said I to myself: here you are in the family of a Sicilian count, of whose character you know nothing. To judge by appearances, you will be as much in your element as a duck upon the water. But do not make too sure! you ought to look askew at your horoscope, whose unkindly position you have too often experienced with a vengeance. Independent of that, it is not easy to conjecture what he means you to do. There are secretaries and a steward already: where can your post be? In all likelihood you are intended to manage his little private affairs. Well and good! There is no better luck about the house of a great nobleman, if you would travel post haste to make your fortune. In the performance of more honourable services, a man gets on only step by step, and even at that pace often sticks by the way.

While these philosophical reflections were revolving in my mind, a servant came to tell me that all the company was gone home, and that my lord the count was inquiring for me. I flew immediately to his apartment, where I found him lolling on the sofa, ready to take his afternoon's nap, with his monkey by his side.

Come nearer, Gil Blas, said he; take a chair, and hear me attentively. I placed myself in an attitude of profound listening, when he addressed me as follows. Don Fabricio has informed me that, among other good qualities, you have that of sincere attachment to your masters, and incorruptible integrity. These are my inducements for proposing to take you into my service. I stand in need of a friend in a domestic, to espouse my interests and apply his whole heart and soul to the reform of my establishment. My fortune is large, it must be confessed, but my expenditure far exceeds my income every year. And how happens that? Because they rob, ransack, and devour me. I might as well be in a forest infested by banditti, as an inhabitant of my own house. I suspect the clerk of the kitchen and my steward of playing into

one another's hands; and unless my thoughts are unjust as well as uncharitable, they are pushing forward as fast as they can to ruin me beyond redemption. You will ask me what I have to do but send them packing, if I think them scoundrels. But then where are others to be got of a better breed? It will be sufficient to place them under the eye of a man who shall be invested with the right of control over their conduct; and you have I chosen to execute this commission. If you discharge it well, be assured that your services will not be repaid with ingratitude. I shall take care to provide you with a very comfortable settlement in Sicily.

With this he dismissed me; and that very evening, in the presence of the whole household, I was proclaimed principal manager and surveyor-general of the family. Our gentlemen of Messina and Naples expressed no particular chagrin at first, because they considered me as a spark of mettle like their own, and took it for granted, that though the loaf was to be shared with a third, there would always be cut and come again for the triumvirate. But they looked inexpressibly foolish the next day, when I declared myself in serious terms a decided enemy to all peculation and underhand dealing. From the clerk of the kitchen I required the buttery accounts without varnish or concealment. I went down into the cellar. The furniture of the butler's pantry underwent a strict examination, particularly in the articles of plate and linen. Next I read them a serious lecture on the duty of acting for their employer as they would for themselves; exhorted them to adopt a system of economy in their expenditure; and wound up my harangue with a protestation, that his lordship should be acquainted with the very first instance of any unfair tricks that I should discover in the exercise of my office.

But I had not yet got to the length of my tether. There was still wanting a scout to ascertain whether they had any private understanding. I fixed upon a scullion, who, won over by my promises, told me that I could not have applied to a better person to be informed of all that was passing in the family; that the clerk of the kitchen and the steward were one as good as the other, and agreed to burn the candle at both ends; that half the provisions bought

for the table were made perquisites by these gentlemen; that the Neapolitan kept a lady who lives opposite St Thomas's college, and his colleague, not to be outdone, provided for another next door to the Sungate; that these two nymphs had their larder regularly supplied every morning, while the cook, following a good example, sent a few little nice things to a widow of his acquaintance in the neighbourhood: but as he winked at the table arrangements of his dear and confidential friends, it was but fair that he should draw whenever he pleased upon the wine-cellar: in short, by the practices of these three blood-suckers, a most horrible system of extravagance had found its way into my lord the count's establishment. If you doubt my veracity, added the scullion, only take the trouble of going to-morrow morning about seven o'clock into the neighbourhood of St Thomas's college, and you will see me with a load upon my back, which will convert your suspicions into certainty. Then you, said I, are in the confidence of these honest purveyors? I am factor to the clerk of the kitchen, answered he; and one of my comrades runs on errands for the steward.

I had the curiosity the next day to loiter about St Thomas's college at the appointed hour. My informer was punctual to time and place. He brought with him a large tray full of butcher's meat, poultry, and game. I took an account of every article; and drew out the bill of fare in my memorandum book, for the purpose of shewing it to my master: at the same time telling my little turnspit to execute his commission as usual.

His Sicilian lordship, naturally warm in his temper, would have turned his countryman and the Italian out of doors together, in the first fury of his anger; but after cooling upon it, he got rid of the former only, and gave me his vacant place. Thus my office of supervisor was suppressed very shortly after its creation; nor did I relinquish it with any reluctance. To define it strictly and properly, it was nothing better than that of a spy with a sounding title; there was nothing substantial in the nature of the appointment: whereas to the stewardship was tied the key of the strong box, and with that goes the mastery of the whole family. There are so many little perquisites and so much patronage attached to that department of

administration, that a man must inevitably get rich, almost in spite of his own honesty.

But our Neapolitan was not so easily to be driven from his strongholds. Observing to what a pitch of savage zeal I carried my integrity, and that I was up every morning time enough to enter in my books the exact quantity of meat that came from market, he abandoned the practice of sending it off by wholesale: yet the plunderer did not therefore contract the scale of his demands on the animal creation. He was cunning enough to make it as broad as it was long, by arranging the services with so much the more profusion. Thus, what was sent down again untouched being his property by culinary common law, he had nothing to do but to pamper up his pet with victuals ready dressed, instead of giving her the trouble of cooking for herself. The devil will levy his due out of every transaction; so that the count was very little the better for his paragon of a steward. The unbounded prodigality in our style of setting out a table, even to a surfeiting degree, was a plain hint to me of what was going forward; I therefore took upon myself to retrench the superfluities of every course. This, however, was done with so judicious a hand, that there was nothing like parsimony to be discovered. No one would ever have missed what was taken away; and yet the expense was reduced very considerably by a well-regulated economy. That was just what my employer wanted; good house-wifery, but a magnificent establishment. There was a love of saving at the bottom; but a taste for grandeur was the ostensible passion.

Abuses seldom exist alone. The wine flowed too freely. If, for instance, there were a dozen gentlemen at his lordship's table, the consumption was seldom less than fifty, sometimes sixty bottles. This was strange; and looked as if there was more in it than met the lips of the guests. Hereupon I consulted my oracle of the scullery, whence I derived most of my wisdom: for he brought me a faithful account of all that was said and done in the kitchen, where they had not the least suspicion of him. It seemed that the havoc of which I complained proceeded from a new confederacy between the clerk of the kitchen, the cook, and the under butler. The latter carried off the

bottles half full, and shared their contents with his allies. I spoke to him on the subject, threatening to turn him and all the footmen under him out of doors at a minute's warning, if ever they did the like again. The hint was understood, and the evil remedied. I took especial care lest the slightest of my services should be lost upon my master, who overwhelmed me with commendations, and took a greater liking to me every day. On my part, as a reward to the scullion, he was promoted to the situation next under the cook.

The Neapolitan was furious at encountering me in every direction. The most aggravating circumstance of the whole was the overhauling of his accounts; for, to pare his nails the closer, I had gone into the market, and informed myself of the prices. I followed him through all his doublings, and always took off the market penny which he wanted to add. He must have cursed me a hundred times a day; but the curses of the wicked fall in blessings on the good. I wonder how he could stay in his place under such discipline; but probably something still stuck by the fingers.

Fabricio, whom I saw occasionally, rather blamed my conduct than otherwise. Heaven grant, said he, one day, that all this virtue may meet with its reward! But between ourselves you might as well be a little more practicable with the clerk of the kitchen. What! answered I, shall this freebooter put a bold face upon the matter, and charge a fish at ten pistoles in his bill, which costs only four, and would you have me pass the articles in my accounts? Why not? replied he, coolly. He has only to let you go snacks in the commission, and the books will be balanced in your favour by the customary rule of stewardship arithmetic. Upon my word, my friend, you are enough to overturn all regular systems of housekeeping; and you are likely to end your days in a livery, if you let the eel slip through your fingers without skinning it. You are to learn that fortune is a very woman; ready and eager to surrender, but expecting the formality of a summons.

I only laughed at this doctrine; and Nunez laughed at it too, when he found that bad advice was thrown away upon an incorrigibly honest subject. He then wished to

make me believe it was all a mere joke. At all events, nothing could shake my resolution to act for my employer as for myself. Indeed my actions corresponded with my words on that subject; for I may venture to say that in four months my master saved at least three thousand ducats by my thrift.

CHAPTER XVI

AN ACCIDENT HAPPENS TO THE COUNT DE GALIANO'S MONKEY; HIS LORDSHIP'S AFFLICTION ON THAT OCCASION. THE ILLNESS OF GIL BLAS, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

At the expiration of the before-mentioned time, the repose of the family was marvellously troubled by an accident, which will appear but a trifle to the reader; and yet it was a very serious matter to the household, especially to me. Cupid, the monkey of whom I was speaking, that animal, so much the idol of our lord and master, attempting to leap from one window to another, performed so ill as to fall into the court and put his leg out of joint. No sooner were the fatal tidings carried to the count, than he sung a dirge which pealed through all the neighbourhood. In the extremity of his sufferings, every inmate without exception was taken to task, and we were all within an inch of being packed off about our business. But the storm only rumbled without falling; he gave us and our negligence to the devil, without being by any means select in the terms of the bequest. The most notorious of the faculty in the line of fractures and dislocations were sent for. They examined the poor dear leg, set, and bound it up. But though they all gave it as their opinion that there was no danger, my master could not be satisfied without retaining the most eminent about the person of the animal, till he could be pronounced to be in a state of convalescence.

It would be a manifest injustice to the family affections of his Sicilian lordship, not to commemorate all the agonizing sensations of his soul during this period of painful suspense. Would it be thought possible that this tender nurse did not stir from his darling Cupid's bedside all the

ive-long day? The bandages were never altered or adjusted but in his presence, and he got up two or three times in the night to inquire after his patient. The most provoking part of the business was, that all the servants, and myself in particular, were required to be eternally on the alert, to anticipate the slightest wishes of this ridiculous baboon. In short, there was no peace in the house, till the cursed beast, having recovered from the effects of its fall, got back again to his old tricks and whirligigs. After this shall we be mealy-mouthed about believing Suetonius, when he tells us that Caligula cared more for his horse than for all the world besides, that he gave him more than the establishment and attendance of a senator, and that he even wanted to make him consul? Our wise master stopped little short of the emperor in his partiality to the monkey; and had serious thoughts of purchasing for him the place of corregidor.

Mine was the worst luck of any in the family; for I had so topped my part above all the other servants, by way of paying my court to his lordship, and had nursed poor dear Lupid with such assiduity, as to throw myself into a fit of illness. A violent fever seized me, so that I was almost at death's door. They did what they pleased with me for a whole fortnight, without my consciousness; for the physicians and the fates were both conspiring against me. But my youth was more than a match for the fever and the prescriptions united. When I recovered my senses, the first use I made of them was to observe myself removed to another room. I wanted to know why; and asked an old woman who nursed me: but she told me that I must not talk, as the physician had expressly forbidden it. When we are well, we turn up our noses at the doctors; but when we are sick, we are as much like old women as themselves.

It seemed best therefore to keep silence, though with an inveterate longing to hold converse with my attendant. I was debating the point in my own mind, when there came in two foppish-looking fellows, dressed in the very extreme of fashion. Nothing less than velvet would serve their turn, with linen and lace to correspond. They looked like men of rank; and I could have sworn that they were some of my master's friends come to see me out of regard

for him. Under that impression I attempted to sit up, and flung away my nightcap to look genteel; but the nurse forced me under the bedclothes again, and tucked me up, announcing these gentlemen at the same time, as my physician and apothecary.

The doctor came up to my bedside, felt my pulse, looked in my face; and discovering undeniable symptoms of approaching convalescence, assumed an air of triumph, as if it was all his handiwork; and said there was nothing wanting but to keep the bowels open, and then he flattered himself he might boast of having performed an extraordinary cure. Speaking after this manner, he dictated a prescription to the apothecary, looking in the glass all the time, adjusting the dress of his hair, and twisting his visage into shapes which set me laughing in spite of my debility. At length he took his leave with a slight inclination of the head, and went his way, more taken with the contemplation of his own pretty person, than anxious about the success of his remedies.

After his departure, the apothecary, not to have the trouble of a visit for nothing, made ready to proceed as it is prescribed in certain cases. Whether he was afraid that the old woman's skill was not equal to the exigency, or whether he meant to enhance his own services by assiduity, he chose to operate in person; but in spite of practice and experience, accidents will happen. Haste to return benefits is among the most amiable propensities of our nature; and such was my eagerness not to be behindhand with my benefactor, that his velvet dress bore immediate testimony to the profuseness of my gratitude. This he considered merely as one of those little occurrences which chequer the fortunes of the pharmaceutical profession. A napkin is a resource for everything in a sick room, and least said was soonest mended; so he wiped himself quietly, vowing indemnity and vengeance to himself for the necessity under which he unquestionably laboured of sending his clothes to the scourer.

On the following morning he returned to the attack more modestly equipped, though there was then no risk of my springing a countermine, as he had only to administer the potion which the doctor had prescribed the evening before. Besides that I felt myself getting better every

moment, I had taken such a dislike, since the day before, to the pill-dispensing tribe, as to curse the very universities where these graduated cut-throats kept their exercises in the faculty of slaying. In this temper of mind, I declared, with a round oath, that I would not accept of health through such a medium, but would willingly make over Hippocrates and his myrmidons to the devil. The apothecary, who did not care a doit what became of his compound, if it was but paid for, left the phial on the table, and stalked away in Telamonian silence.

I immediately ordered that bitch of a medicine to be thrown out of window, having set myself so doggedly against it, that I would as soon have swallowed arsenic. Having once drawn the sword, I threw away the scabbard; and erecting my tongue into an independent potentate, told my nurse in a determined tone, that she must absolutely inform me what was become of my master. The old lady, fearing lest the development of the mystery might completely overset me, or thinking possibly that her prey might escape out of her clutches for want of a little irritating contradiction, was most provokingly mute; but I was so pressing in my demand to be obeyed, that she at length gave me a decisive answer: Worthy sir, you have no longer any master but your own will. Count Galiano is gone back into Sicily.

I could not believe my ears; and yet it was fatally the fact. That nobleman, on the second day of my indisposition, being afraid of harbouring death under the same roof with him, had the benevolence to send me packing with my little effects to a ready-furnished room, where Providence was left to cure, or a nurse to kill me, as it happened. While the alternative was tottering on the balance, he was ordered back into Sicily, and in the headlong haste of his obedience, never thought about me; whether it was that he numbered me already among the dead, or that great lords, like great wits, have short memories.

My nurse gave me these particulars, and informed me that it was she who had called in a physician and an apothecary, that I might not die without professional honours. I fell into profound musing at this fine story. Farewell my brilliant establishment in Sicily! Farewell

my budding hopes and blushing honours! When any great misfortune shall have befallen you, says a certain pope, look well to your own conduct, and you will find that there is always something wrong at the bottom of it. With all reverent submission to his holiness, I cannot help thinking myself in this instance an exception to the infallibility of his maxim. How the deuce was I to blame for being visited by a fever? There was more reason for remorse in the monkey or his master than in me.

When I beheld the flattering chimeras with which my head was filled, all vanishing into air, into thin air, the first thing that worried my poor brain was my portmanteau, which I ordered to be laid upon my bed to examine it. I groaned heavily on discovering that it had been opened. Alas! my dear portmanteau, exclaimed I, my only hope, consolation, and refuge! You have been, to all appearance, a prisoner in an enemy's country. No, no, Signor Gil Blas, said the old woman, make yourself easy on that head; you have not fallen among thieves. Your baggage is as immaculate as my honour.

I found the dress I had on at my first entrance into the count's service; but it was in vain to look for that which my friend from Messina had ordered for me as a member of the household. My master had not thought fit to leave me in possession of it, or else some one had made free with it. All my other little matters were safe, and even a large leather purse with my coin in it, which I counted over twice, not being able to believe at first that there could be only fifty pistoles remaining out of two hundred and sixty, which was the balance of the account before my illness. What is the meaning of all this, my good lady? said I to the nurse. Here is a leak in the vessel. No living soul but myself has touched a farthing, answered the old woman, and I have been as good an economist for you as possible. But illness is very expensive; one must always have one's money in one's hand. Here! added this excellent economist, taking a bundle of papers out of her pocket, this is a statement of debtor and creditor, as exact as a banker's book, and you will see that I have not laid out the veriest trifle in need-nots.

I ran over the account with a hasty glance; for it extended to fifteen or twenty pages. Mercy on us! The

poulterers' shops must have been exhausted, while I was in too weak a state to take sustenance! There must have been at least twelve pistoles stewed down into broths. Other articles were much to the same tune. It was incredible what a sum had been lavished in firing, candles, water, brooms, and innumerable articles of housekeeping and house-cleaning. After all, extortionate as the bill was, the utmost ingenuity could not raise it above thirty pistoles, and consequently there was a deficiency of a hundred and eighty to make the account even. I just ventured to point that out; but the old woman, with a show of simplicity and candour, put all the saints in the calendar into requisition to attest that there were no more than eighty pistoles in the purse when the count's steward gave her charge of the wallet. What say you, my good woman, interrupted I with precipitation: was it the steward who placed my effects in your hands? To be sure it was, answered she; the very man; and with this piece of advice: Here, good mother, when Gil Blas shall be numbered with the dead, do not fail to treat him with a handsome funeral; there is in this wallet wherewithal to defray the expenses.

Ah! most pestiferous Neapolitan! exclaimed I in the bitterness of my heart. I am no longer at a loss to conjecture what is become of the deficiency. You have swept it off as an indemnity for a part of the plunder which I have prevented you from making free with. After relieving my mind by exclamations, I returned thanks to heaven that the scoundrel had been so modest as not to take the whole. Yet whatever reason I had for believing the action to be perfectly in character for the person to whom it was imputed, the nurse had not altogether cleared herself from my suspicions. They hovered sometimes over one and sometimes over the other; but let them light where they would, it was all the same to me. I said nothing about the matter to the old woman; not even so much as to haggle about the items of her fine bill. I should not have been an atom the richer for doing so; and we must all live by our trades. The utmost of my malice was to pay her and send her packing three days afterwards.

I am inclined to think that at her departure she gave

the apothecary notice of her quitting the premises, and having left me sufficiently in possession of myself to take French leave without acknowledging my obligations to him; for she had not been gone many minutes before he came in puffing and blowing, with his bill in his hand. There, under names which had escaped my conscription, though as arrant a physician as the worst of them, he had set down all the hypothetical remedies which he insisted that I had taken during the time when I could take nothing. This bill might truly be called the epitome of an apothecary's conscience. Such being the case, we had a bustle about the payment. I pleaded for an abatement of one-half. He swore that he would not take a doit less than his just demand. He kept his oath and yet relaxed; for considering that he had to do with a young man who might run away from Madrid within four-and-twenty hours, he preferred my offer of three hundred per cent. on the prime cost of his drugs, though a pitiful profit for an apothecary, to the risk of losing all. I counted out the money with an aching heart, and he withdrew, chuckling over his revenge for the scurvy trick I had played him on the day of evacuation.

The physician made his appearance next; for beasts of prey inhabit the same latitudes. I fee'd him for his visits, which had been quite as frequent as necessary, and his object was answered. But he would not leave me without proving how hardly he had earned his money, for that he had not only expelled the enemy from the interior, but had defended the frontiers from the attack of all the disorders on the army list of the *materia medica*. He talked very learnedly, with good emphasis and discretion; so much so, that I did not comprehend one word he said. When I had got rid of him, I flattered myself that the destinies had now done their worst. But I was mistaken; for there came a surgeon whose face I had never seen in the whole course of my life. He accosted me very politely, and congratulated me on the imminent danger I had escaped; attributing the happy issue of my complaints to those which he had himself cut, with the profuse application of bleeding, cupping, blistering, and all sorts of torments, consequent and inconsequent. Another feather out of my poor wing! I was obliged to pay toll to

he surgeon also. After so many purgatives, my purse vas brought to such a state of debility, that it might be considered as dead and gone; a mere skeleton, drained of ll its vital juices.

My spirits began to flag, on the contemplation of my vretched case. In the service of my two last masters I ad wedded myself to the pomps and vanities of this icked world; and could no longer, as heretofore, look overty in the face with the sternness of a cynic. It must e owned, however, that I was in the wrong to give way melancholy, after experiencing so often that fortune had ever cast me down, but for the purpose of raising me up gain; so that my pitiful plight at the present moment, if ightly considered, was only to be hailed as the harbinger f approaching prosperity.

BOOK THE EIGHTH

CHAPTER I

IL BLAS SCRAPES AN ACQUAINTANCE OF SOME VALUE, AND FINDS WHEREWITHAL TO MAKE HIM AMENDS FOR THE COUNT DE GALIANO'S INGRATITUDE. DON VALERIO DE LUNA'S STORY

It seemed so strange to have heard not a syllable from unez during this long interval, that I concluded he must e in the country. I went to look after him as soon as I ould walk, and found the fact to be, that he had gone into ndalusia three weeks ago, with the Duke of Medina idonia.

One morning when rubbing my eyes after a sound sleep, elchior de la Ronda started into my recollection; and hat bringing to mind my promise at Grenada, of going to e his nephew, if ever I should return to Madrid, it seemed dvisable not to defer fulfilling my promise for a single ay. I inquired where Don Balthazar de Zuniga lived, and ent thither straightway. On asking if Signor Joseph avarro was at home, he made his appearance immedi-tely. We exchanged bows with a well-bred coolness on

his part, though I had taken care to announce my name audibly. There was no reconciling such a frosty reception with the glowing portrait ascribed to this paragon of the buttery. I was just going to withdraw in the full determination of not coming again, when assuming all at once an open and smiling aspect, he said with considerable earnestness: Ah! Signor Gil Blas de Santillane, pray forgive the formality of your welcome. My memory ill seconded the warmth of my disposition towards you. Your name had escaped me, and was not at the moment identified with the gentleman, of whom mention was made in a letter from Grenada more than four months ago.

How happy I am to see you! added he, shaking hands with me most cordially. My uncle Melchior, whom I love and honour like my natural father, charges me, if by chance I should have the honour of seeing you, to entertain you as his own son, and in case of need, to stretch my own credit and that of my friends to the utmost in your behalf. He extols the qualities of your heart and mind in terms sufficient of themselves to engage me in your service, though his recommendation had not been added to the other motives. Consider me, therefore, I entreat you, as participating in all my uncle's sentiments. You may depend on my friendship; let me hope for an equal share in yours.

I replied to Joseph's polite assurances in suitable terms of acknowledgment; so that being both of us warm-hearted and sincere, a close intimacy sprung up without waiting for common forms. I felt no embarrassment about laying open the state of my affairs. This I had no sooner done, than he said: I take upon myself the care of finding you a situation; meanwhile, there is a knife and fork for you here every day. You will live rather better than at an ordinary. This offer was sure to be well relished by an invalid just recovering with a fastidious palate and an empty pocket. It could not but be accepted; and I picked up my crumbs so fast that at the end of a fortnight I began to look like a rosy-gilled son of the church. It struck me that Melchior's nephew larded his lean sides to some purpose. But how could it be otherwise? he had three strings to his bow, as holding the undermentioned pluralities: the butler's place, the clerkship of the kitchen,

nd the stewardship. Furthermore, without meaning to uestion my friend's honesty, they do say that the comp-roller of the household and he looked over each other's rands.

My recovery was entirely confirmed, when my friend oseph, on my coming in to dinner as usual one day, said rith an air of congratulation: Signor Gil Blas, I have a rery tolerable situation in view for you. You must know nat the Duke of Lerma, first minister of the crown in pain, giving himself up entirely to state affairs, throws the urden of his own on two confidential persons. Don iego de Monteser takes the charge of collecting his rents nd Don Rodrigo de Calderona superintends the finances f his household. These two officers are paramount in their epartments, having nothing to do with one another. Don iego has generally two deputies to transact the business; nd finding just now that one of them had been discharged, have been canvassing for you. Signor Monteser having ne greatest possible regard for me, granted my request at nce, on the strength of my testimony to your morals and apacity. We will pay our respects to him after dinner.

We did not miss our appointment. I was received with very mark of favour, and promoted in the room of the ismissed deputy. My business consisted in visiting the arms, in giving orders for the necessary repairs, in dun-ing the farmers, and keeping them to time in their pay-ents; in a word, the tenants were all under my thumb, nd Don Diego checked my accounts every month with a inuteness which few receivers could have borne. But is was exactly what I wanted. Though my uprightness ad been so ill requited by my late master, it was my only heritance, and I was determined not to sell the rever-ion.

One day news came that the castle of Lerma had taken re, and was more than half burnt down. I immediately ent thither to estimate the loss. Informing myself to a cety, and on the spot, respecting all the particulars of the nlucky accident, I drew up a detailed narrative, which onteser shewed to the Duke of Lerma. That minister, ough vexed at the circumstance, was struck with the emorial, and inquired who was the author. Don Diego ought it not enough to answer the question, but spoke

of me in such high terms, that his excellency recollected it six months afterwards, on occasion of an incident I shall now relate, had it not been for which I might never, perhaps, have been employed at court. It was as follows:

There lived at that time in Princes Street an elderly lady, by name Inesilla de Cantarilla. Her birth was a matter of mystery. Some said she was the daughter of a musical instrument-maker, and others gave her a high military extraction. However that might be, she was a very extraordinary personage. Nature had gifted her with the singular talent of winning men's hearts in defiance of time, and in contradiction to her own laws; for she was now entering upon the fourth quarter of her century. She had been the reigning toast of the old court, and levied tribute on the passions of the new. Age, though at daggers drawn with beauty, was completely foiled in its assault upon her charms; they might be somewhat faded, but the touch of sympathy they excited in their decline was more pleasing than the vivid glow of their meridian lustre. An air of dignity, a transporting wit and humour, an unborrowed grace in her deportment, perpetuated the reign of passion, and silenced the suggestions of reason.

Don Valerio de Luna, one of the Duke of Lerma's secretaries, a young fellow of five-and-twenty, meeting with Inesilla, fell violently in love with her. He made his sentiments known, enacted all the mummery of despair, and followed up the usual catastrophe of every amorous drama so much according to the unities and rules, that it was difficult, in the very torrent and whirlwind of his passion, to beget a temperance that might give it smoothness. The lady, who had her reason for not choosing to fall in with his humour, was at a loss how to get out of the difficulty. One day she was in hopes to have found the means by calling the young man into her closet, and there pointing to a clock upon the table. Mark the precise hour, said she; just seventy-five years ago was I brought upon the stage of this fantastical world. In good earnest, would it sit well upon my time of life to be engaged in affairs of gallantry? Betake yourself to reflection, my good child; stifle sentiments so unsuitable to your own circumstances and mine. Sensible as this language was, the spark, no longer bowing to the authority of reason, answered the

lady with all the impetuosity of a man racked by the most excruciating torments: Cruel Inesilla, why have you recourse to such frivolous remonstrances? Do you think they can change your charms or my desires? Delude not yourself with so false a hope. As long as your loveliness or my delusion lasts, I shall never cease to adore you. Well, then, rejoined she, since you are obstinate enough to persist in the resolution of wearying me with your importunities, my doors shall henceforth be shut against you. You are banished, and I beg to be no longer troubled with your company.

It may be supposed, perhaps, that after this, Don Valerio, baffled, made good his retreat like a prudent general. Quite the reverse! He became more troublesome than ever. Love is to lovers just what wine is to drunkards. The swain intreated, sighed, looked, and sighed again; when all at once, changing his note from childish treble to the big manly voice of bluster and ravishment, he swore that he would have by foul means what he could not obtain by fair. But the lady, repulsing him courageously, said with a piercing look of strong resentment, Hold, imprudent wretch! I shall put a curb on your mad career. Learn that you are my own son.

Don Valerio was thunderstruck at these words; the tempest of his rage subsided. But, conjecturing that Inesilla had only started this device to rid herself of his solicitations, he answered, That is a mere romance of the moment to steal away from my ardent desires. No, no, said she, interrupting him, I disclose a mystery which should have been for ever buried, had you not reduced me to so painful a necessity. It is six-and-twenty years since I was in love with your father, Don Pedro de Luna, then governor of Segovia; you were the fruit of our mutual passion: he owned you, brought you up with care and tenderness, and having no children born in wedlock, he had nothing to hinder him from distinguishing your good qualities by the gifts of fortune. On my part, I have not forsaken you; as soon as you were of an age to be introduced into the world, I drew you into the circle of my acquaintance, to form your manners to that polish of good company, so necessary for a gentleman, which is only to be gained in female society. I have done more: I have em-

ployed all my credit to introduce you to the prime minister. In short, I have interested myself for you as I should have done for my own son. After this confession, take your measures accordingly. If you can purge your affections from their dross, and look on me as a mother, you are not banished from my presence, and I shall treat you with my accustomed tenderness. But if you are not equal to an effort, which nature and reason demand from you, fly instantly, and release me from the horror of beholding you.

Inesilla spoke to this effect. Meanwhile Don Valerio preserved a sudden silence: it might have been interpreted into a virtuous struggle, a conquest over the weakness of his heart. But his purposes were far different; he had another scene to act before his mother. Unable to withstand the total overthrow of all his wild projects, he basely yielded to despair. Drawing his sword, he plunged it in his own bosom. His fate resembled that of Œdipus, with this distinction; that the Theban put out his own eyes from remorse for the crime he had perpetrated, while the Castilian, on the contrary, committed suicide from disappointment at the frustration of his purposes.

The unhappy Don Valerio was not released from his sufferings immediately. He had leisure left for recollection, and for making his peace with heaven, before he rushed into the presence of his Maker. As his death vacated one of the secretaryships on the Duke of Lerma's establishment, that minister, not having forgotten my memoir on the subject of the fire, nor the high character he had heard of me, nominated me to succeed to the post in question.

CHAPTER II

GIL BLAS IS INTRODUCED TO THE DUKE OF LERMA, WHO ADMITS HIM AMONG THE NUMBER OF HIS SECRETARIES, AND REQUIRES A SPECIMEN OF HIS TALENTS, WITH WHICH HE IS WELL SATISFIED

Monteser was the person to inform me of this agreeable circumstance, which he did in the following terms: My friend Gil Blas, though I do not lose you without regret, I am too much your well-wisher not to be delighted at your

promotion in the room of Don Valerio. You cannot fail to make a princely fortune, provided you act upon two hints which I have to give you: the first, to affect so total a devotion to his excellency's good pleasure, as to leave no room to conceive it possible that you have any other object or interest in life—the second, to pay your court assiduously to Signor Don Rodrigo de Calderona; for that personage models and remodels, fashions and touches upon the mind of his master, just as if it was clay under the hands of the designer. If you are fortunate enough to chime in with that favourite secretary, you will travel post to wealth and honour, and find relays upon the road.

Sir, said I to Don Diego, returning him thanks at the same time for his good advice, be pleased to give some little opening to Don Rodrigo's character. I have heard a few anecdotes of him. One would suppose him, from some accounts, not to be the best creature in the world; but the people at large are inveterate caricaturists when they draw courtiers at full length; though, after all, the likeness will strike, in spite of the aggravation. Tell me, therefore, I beseech you, what is your own sincere opinion of Signor Calderona. That is rather an awkward question, answered my principal with an ironical smile. I should tell any one but yourself, without flinching, that he was a gentleman of the strictest honour, upon whose fair fame the breath of calumny had never dared to blow; but I really cannot put off such a copy of my countenance upon you. Relying as I do on your discretion, it becomes a duty to deal candidly in the delineation of Don Rodrigo; for without that, it would be playing fast and loose with you to recommend the cultivation of his good-will.

You are to know then, that when his excellency was no more than plain Don Francisco de Sandoval, this man had the humility to serve him as his lackey; since which time he has risen by degrees to the post of principal secretary. A prouder excrescence of the dunghill never sprung into vegetation on a summer's day. He considers himself as the Duke of Lerma's colleague; and in point of fact, he may truly be said to parcel out the loaves and fishes of administration, since he gives away offices and governments at the suggestions of his own caprice. The public grumbles and growls upon occasion; but who cares for

the grumbling and growling of the public? Let him steal a pair of gloves from the prostitution of political honour, and the bronze upon his forehead will be proof against the peltings of scandal. What I have said will decide your dealings towards so supercilious a compound of dust and ashes. Yes, to be sure, said I; leave me alone for that. It will be strange indeed if I cannot wriggle myself into his good graces. If one can but get on the blind side of a man who is to be made a property, it must be want of skill in the player if the game is lost. Exactly so, replied Monteser; and now I will introduce you to the Duke of Lerma.

We went at once to the minister, whom we found in his audience-chamber. His levee was more crowded than the king's. There were commanders and knights of St James and of Calatrava, making interest for governments and viceroyalties; bishops who, labouring under oppression of the breath and tightness of the chest in their own dioceses, had been recommended the air of an archbishopric by their physicians; while the sounder lungs of lower dignitaries were strong enough to inhale the Theban atmosphere of a suffragan see. I observed besides some reduced officers dancing attendance to Captain Chinchilla's tune, and catching cold in fishing for a pension, which was never likely to pay the doctor for their cure. If the duke did not satisfy their wants, he put a pleasant face upon their importunities; and it struck me that he returned a civil answer to all applicants.

We waited patiently till the routine of ceremony was despatched. Then said Don Diego: My lord, this is Gil Blas de Santillane, the young man appointed by your excellency to succeed Don Valerio. The duke now took more particular notice of me, saying obligingly, that I had already earned my promotion by my services. He then took me to a private conference in his closet, or rather to an examination. My birth, parentage, and course of life were the objects of his inquiry; nor would he be satisfied without the particulars, and those in the spirit of sincerity. What a career to run over before a patron! Yet it was impossible to lie, in the presence of a prime minister. On the other hand, my vanity was concerned in suppressing so many circumstances, that there was no venturing on an

unqualified confession. What cunning scene had Roscius then to act? A little painting and tattooing might decently be employed to disguise the nakedness of truth, and spare her unsophisticated blushes. But he had studied her complexion, as well as the beauties of her natural form. Monsieur de Santillane, said he with a smile on the close of my narrative, I perceive that hitherto you have had your principles to choose. My lord, answered I, colouring up to the eyes, your excellency enjoined me to deal sincerely; and I have complied with your orders. I take your doing so in good part, replied he. It is all very well, my good fellow: you have escaped from the snares of this wicked world more by luck than management: it is wonderful that bad example should not have corrupted you irreparably. There are many men of strict virtue and exemplary piety, who would have turned out the greatest rogues in existence, if their destinies had exposed them to but half your trials.

Friend Santillane, continued the minister, ponder no longer on the past; consider yourself as to the very bone and marrow the king's; live henceforth but for his service. Come this way; I will instruct you in the nature of your business. He carried me into a little closet adjoining his own, which contained a score of thick folio registers. This is your workshop, said he. All these registers compose an alphabetical peerage, giving the heraldry and history of all the nobility and gentry in the several kingdoms and principalities of the Spanish monarchy. In these volumes are recorded the services rendered to the state by the present possessors and their ancestors, descending even to the personal animosities and rencounters of the individuals and their houses. Their fortunes, their manners, in a word, all the pros and cons of their character are set down according to the letter of ministerial scrutiny; so that they no sooner enter on the list of court candidates, than my eye catches up the very chapter and verse of their pretensions. To furnish this necessary information, I have pensioned scouts everywhere on the look-out, who send me private notices of their discoveries; but as these documents are for the most part drawn up in a gossiping and provincial style, they require to be translated into gentlemanly language, or the king would not be able to sup-

port the perusal of the registers: This task demands the pen of a polite and perspicuous writer; I doubt not but you will justify your claim to the appointment.

After this introduction, he put a memorial into my hand, taken from a large portfolio full of papers, and then withdrew from my closet, that my first specimen might be manufactured in all the freedom of solitude. I read the memorial, which was not only stuffed with a most uncouth jargon, but breathed a brimstone spirit of rancour and personal revenge. This was most foul, strange, and unnatural! for the homily was written by a monk. He hacked and hewed a Catalan family of some note most unmercifully; with what reason or truth, it must be reserved for a more penetrating inquirer to decide. It read for all the world like an infamous libel, and I had some scruples about becoming the publisher of the calumny; nevertheless, young as I was at court, I plunged head foremost, at the risk of sinking and destroying his reverence's soul. The wickedness, if there was any, would be put down to his running account with the recording angel: I therefore had nothing to do but to vilify, in the purest Spanish phraseology, some two or three generations of honest men and loyal subjects.

I had already blackened four or five pages, when the duke, impatient to know how I got on, came back and said —Santillane, shew me what you have done; I am curious to see it. At the same time, casting his eye over the transcript, he read the beginning with much attention. It seemed to please him; strange that he could be so pleased! Prepossessed as I have been in your favour, observed he, I must own that you have surpassed my expectations. It is not merely the elegance and distinctness of the handwriting! There is something animated and glowing in the composition. You will do ample credit to my choice, and fully make up for the loss of your predecessor. He would not have cut my panegyric so short, if his nephew the Count de Lemos had not interrupted him in the middle of it. By the warmth and frequency of his excellency's welcome, it was evident that they were the best friends in the world. They were immediately closeted together on some family business, of which I shall speak in the sequel.

The king's affairs at this time were obliged to play second to those of the minister.

While they were caballing it struck twelve. As I knew that the secretaries and their clerks quitted office at that hour to go and dine wherever their business and desire should point them, I left my prize performance behind me, and went to the gayest tavern at the court end of the town, for I had nothing further to do with Monteser, who had paid my salary, and taken his leave of me. But a common eating-house would have been a very improper place for me to be seen in. "Consider yourself as to the very bone and marrow the king's." This metaphorical expression of the duke had given birth to a real and tangible ambition in my soul, which put forth shoots like a plantation in a fat and unvexed soil.

CHAPTER III

ALL IS NOT GOLD THAT GLITTERS. SOME UNEASINESS RESULTING FROM THE DISCOVERY OF THAT PRINCIPLE IN PHILOSOPHY, AND ITS PRACTICAL APPLICATION TO EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES

I TOOK especial care, on my first entrance, to instil into the tavern-keeper's conception that I was secretary to the prime minister; nor was it easy, in that view of my rank and consequence, to order anything sufficiently sumptuous for dinner. To have selected from the bill of fare, might have looked as if I descended to the meanness of calculation; I therefore told him to send up the best the house afforded. My orders were punctually obeyed; and the anxious assiduity of the attendance pampered my fancy as much as the dishes did my palate. As to the bill, I had nothing to do with it but to pay it. Down went a pistole upon the table, and the waiters pocketed the difference, which was somewhat more than a quarter. After this display of grandeur I strutted out, practising those obstreperous clearings of the throat which announce, by empty sound, the approach of a substantial coxcomb.

There was at the distance of twenty yards a large house with lodgings to let, principally frequented by foreign

nobility. I rented at once a suite of apartments, consisting of five or six rooms elegantly furnished. From my style of living, any one would have thought I had two or three thousand ducats of yearly income. The first month was paid in advance. Afterwards I returned to business, and employed the whole afternoon in going on with what I had begun in the morning. In a closet adjoining mine there were two other secretaries; but their office was only to copy out fair. I got acquainted with them as we were shutting up for the evening; and, by way of smoothing the first overtures towards friendship, invited them home with me to my tavern, where I ordered the choicest delicacies of the season, with a profusion of the most exquisite wines.

We sat down to table, and began bandying about more merriment than wit; for with all due deference to my guests, it was but too visible that they owed their official situations to any circumstance rather than to their abilities. They were adepts, it must be confessed, in all the history and mystery of scrivening and clerkship; but as for polite literature and university education, there was not even a suspicion of it in all their talk.

To make amends for that defect, they had a keen eye to the main chance; and though sensible how high an honour it was to be on the prime minister's establishment, there were some dashes of acid in the cup of good fortune. It is now full five months, said one of them, that we have been serving at our own cost. We do not touch one farthing of salary; and, what is worst of all, our very board wages are shamefully in arrear. There is no knowing what footing we are upon. As for me, said the other, I would willingly be tied up to the halbert, and receive a per centage in lashes, for the liberty of changing my berth; but I dare not either take myself off or petition for my discharge, after having transcribed such state secrets as have passed under my inspection. I might chance to become too well acquainted with the tower of Segovia or the castle of Alicant.

How do you manage for a subsistence, then? said I. You must of course have means of your own. These they represented as very slender; but that, fortunately for them, they lodged with a kind-hearted widow, who boarded

them on tick, at the rate of a hundred pistoles a year for each. These anecdotes of a court life, not one of which escaped me, completely ventilated all the rising fumes of pride. It could not be supposed that more consideration would be shewn to me than to others, and consequently there was nothing to be so puffed up with in my post; there seemed to be much cry and little wool, a discovery which rendered it expedient to husband my finances with a narrower economy. A picture like this was enough to cure my taste for treating. I repented not having left these secretaries to find their own supper; for they played a most cruel knife and fork at mine! and, when the bill was brought, I squabbled with the landlord about the charges.

We parted at midnight; and the early breaking up was to be laid at my door; for I did not propose another bottle. They went home to their widow, and I withdrew to my magnificent lodgings, which I was now mad with myself for having taken, and was fully determined to give up at the month's end. My bed of down was now converted into a couch of thorns; sleep had abandoned his narcotic tenement, and sold the fee-simple of my repose to the demon of eternal wakefulness. The remainder of the night was passed in contriving not to serve the state too patriotically. For that purpose I bethought me of Monteser's good counsel. I got up with the intention of making my bow to Don Rodrigo de Calderona. My present temper was just pat to the purpose of ingratiating myself with so high and mighty a gentleman; whose patronage was indispensable to my existence. I therefore presented my person in that secretary's ante-chamber.

His apartments communicated with the duke's, and rivalled them in the lustre of their decorations. The field officer could scarcely be distinguished from the subaltern by any outward distinction in his paraphernalia. I sent in my name as Don Valerio's successor; but that did not hinder me from being kept kicking my heels for a good hour. Trusty, but novice officer of the king, said I, while ruminating on court manners, learn a lesson of patience, if so please you. You must begin with shewing paces yourself, and afterwards make others bite the bridle.

At length the door of the inner room opened. I went in, and advanced towards Don Rodrigo, who had just been

writing an amorous epistle to his charming Siren, and was giving it to Pedrillo at that very moment. I had never manufactured my face and air into such a counterfeit of reverence before the Archbishop of Grenada, nor on my introduction to the Count de Galiano, nor even in presence of the prime minister himself: the crisis of my fawning was reserved for Signor de Calderona. I paid my respects to him with my body bent down to the very ground, as if crouching under the ken of a superior intelligence; and solicited his protection in strains of humble hypocrisy, at which my cheek now burns with shame, to think that man can so debase himself before his fellow-man. My servility would have recoiled to my own undoing, had it been practised towards a compound of any manly and independent ingredients. As for this fellow, he swallowed flattery by the lump without mastication; and assured me, just as if he meant what he said, that he would leave no stone unturned to do me service.

Hereupon, thanking him with unlimited expressions of attachment for his kind and generous sentiments, I sold my very soul and all my little stock of conscience to his free disposal. But as this farce might be tiresome if prolonged, I took my leave, apologizing for having broken in upon his more serious avocations. As soon as I had finished this abominable scene, I slunk back to my desk, where I finished my prescribed task. The duke was at my elbow the next morning. The end of my performance was not less to his mind than the beginning; and he praised it accordingly: This is extremely well indeed! Copy this abridgment in your best hand into the register of Catalonia. You shall not want employment of this kind. I had a very long conversation with his excellency, and was delighted at his mild and familiar deportment. What a contrast to Calderona! They might have sat to a painter for Pan and Apollo.

To-day I dined at a cheap ordinary, and sunk the secretary upon my messmates, till I should ascertain what solid profit might accrue from all my bows and scrapes. I had funds for three months, or thereabouts. That interval I allowed myself for casting my bread upon the waters. But as the shortest speculations are the safest, if my salary was not paid by that time, a long farewell to the court,

ts frippery, and its falsehood! Thus were my plans rranged. For two months I laboured hard and fast to stand well with Calderona: but his senses were so callous o all my assiduity, that it seemed labour in vain to build n so hopeless a foundation. This idea produced a change n my conduct. I left some greener fool to fumigate the nostrils of this idol; and placed all my own dependence on making my ground sure with the duke, by the benefit of ur frequent conferences.

CHAPTER IV

GIL BLAS BECOMES A FAVOURITE WITH THE DUKE OF LERMA, AND THE CONFIDANT OF AN IMPORTANT SECRET

THOUGH his grace's interviews with me were short as the fleeting visions of supernatural communication, my turn and character won its way gradually into his excellency's good liking. One day after dinner, he said: Attend to me, Gil Blas. I really like you very much. You are a zealous, confidential lad, full of understanding and discretion. My trust cannot be misplaced in such hands. I threw myself at his feet, at the music of these words; and kissing his outstretched hand, answered thus: Is it possible that your excellency can think so favourably of your servant? What a host of enemies will such a preference conjure up against me! But Don Rodrigo is the only man whose privy grudge is formidable enough to alarm me.

You have nothing to fear from that quarter, replied the duke. I know Calderona. He has loved me from his cradle. Every movement of his heart is in unison with mine. He cherishes whatever I love, and hates in exact proportion to my dislike. So far from being alarmed at his ill-will, you ought, on the contrary, to hug yourself on his peculiar partiality. This let me at once into the abysses of Don Rodrigo's character. He shuffled and cut the cards to his own deal, and paid his debts of honour out of his excellency's pool. One could not be too wary with this gentleman.

To begin, pursued the duke, with a proof of my thorough

reliance on your faith, I will open to you a long-projected design. It is necessary for you to be informed of it, to qualify you for the commissions with which I shall hereafter have occasion to intrust you. For a great length of time have I beheld my authority universally respected, my decisions implicitly adopted, places, pensions, governments, vice-royalties, and church preferments all awaiting my disposal. Without umbrage to my royal master, I may be said to be absolute in Spain. My individual fortunes can be pushed no higher. But I would willingly fix firm the structure I have raised; for the storms are already beginning to beat about the citadel of my peace. My only safety must consist in nominating my nephew, the Count de Lemos, as my successor in the ministry.

This profound courtier, observing my astonishment, went on thus. I see plainly, Santillane, I see plainly what surprises you. It seems strange and unaccountable that I should prefer my nephew to my own son, the Duke d'Uzeda. But you are to learn that this last has too narrow a genius to fill up my place in politics; and there are other reasons why I set my face against him. He has found out the secret of making himself agreeable to the king, who wants him for his interior cabinet; and backstairs influence is what I cannot bear. Royal favour is a sort of political mistress; exclusive possession is its only charm. The very existence of the passion is identified with inextinguishable jealousy; nor can we the better endure to share the bliss, because our rival has been nursed in our own bosom.

Thus do I lay bare the very recesses of my soul. I have already tried to ruin the Duke d'Uzeda with the king; but having failed, am pointing my artillery towards another object. I am determined that the Count de Lemos shall stand first with the Prince of Spain. Being gentleman of his bedchamber, he has opportunities of talking with him continually; and, besides that he has a winning manner with him, I know a sure method of enabling him to succeed in his enterprise. By this device, my nephew will be pitted against my son. The cousins harbouring unfavourable suspicions of each other, will both be forced to place themselves under my protection; and the necessity of the case will render them submissive to my will. This

is my project; nor will your assistance be of slender avail to its success. It is you whom I shall make the private channel of communication between the Count de Lemos and myself.

After this confidence, which sounded for all the world like the clink of current coin, my mind was easy about the future. At length, said I, behold me taking shelter under Plutus's gutter; the golden shower may drench me to the skin, before I shall cry hold, enough! It is impossible that the bosom friend of a man, by whom the whole music of the political machine is tempered, should be left to thrum upon the discord of poverty. Full of these harmonious visions, my fifths and octaves were but little untuned by the sensible declension of my purse.

CHAPTER V

THE JOYS, THE HONOURS, AND THE MISERIES OF A COURT LIFE, IN THE PERSON OF GIL BLAS

THE minister's growing partiality towards me was soon noticed. He displayed it ostentatiously, by committing his portfolio to my custody, which it was his habit to carry in his own hand when he went to council. This novelty causing me to be looked upon as a rising favourite, excited the envy of certain persons, so that I was preciously sprinkled with the hellish dew of court malevolence. My two neighbours the secretaries were not the last to compliment me on my budding honours, and invited me to supper at the widow's, not so much by way of returning my hospitality, as with an eye to business in the cultivation of my acquaintance. Parties were made for me everywhere. Even the haughty Don Rodrigo was cap-in-hand to me. He now called me nothing less than Signor de Santillane, though the moon had scarcely changed her face since he *thee'd* and *thou'd* me, without ever bethinking him that he was talking to something above a pauper. He heaped me up and pressed me down with civilities, especially within eyeshot of our common patron. But the fool was wiser than to be caught with chaff. The good breeding of my returns was nicely proportioned to my thorough detestation of my humble servant; a rascal who had lived in court all

his life could not have played the rascal better than I did.

I likewise accompanied my lord duke when he had an audience of the king, which was usually three times a day. In the morning he went into his majesty's chamber as soon as he was awake. There he dropped down on his marrow-bones by the bed-side, talked over what was to be done in the course of the day, and put into the royal mouth the speeches the royal tongue was to make. He then withdrew. After dinner he came back again; not for state affairs, but for *what, what?* and a little gossip. He was well instructed in all the tittle-tattle of Madrid, which was sold to him at the earliest of the season. Lastly, in the evening he saw the king again for the third time, put whatever colour he pleased on the transactions of the day, and, as a matter of course, requested his instructions for the morrow. While he was with the king, I kept in the ante-chamber, where people of the first quality, sinking that they might rise, threw themselves in the way of my observation, and thought the day not lost if I had deigned to exchange a few words of common civility with them. Was it to be wondered at, if my self-importance fattened upon such food? There are many folks at court who stalk about on stilts of much frailer materials.

One day my vanity was still more highly pampered. The king, to whom the duke had puffed off my style, was curious to see a sample of it. His excellency made me bring the register of Catalonia and myself into the royal presence; telling me to read the first memorial I had digested. If so catholic a critic overpowered my modesty at first, the minister's encouragement recalled my scattered spirits, and I read with good tone and emphasis what his majesty deigned to hear with some symptoms of approbation. He spoke handsomely of my performance, and recommended my fortunes to the special care of his minister. My humility was not the greater for the augmentation of my consequence; and a particular conversation some days afterwards with the Count de Lemos swelled high the spring tide of all my ambitious anticipations.

I waited on that nobleman from his uncle at the Prince of Spain's court, and presented credentials from the duke, directing him to deal unreservedly with me, as with a man who was embarked in their design and selected by himself

exclusively as their go-between. The count then took me to a room, where he locked the door, and then spoke as follows: Since you are confidential with the Duke of Lerma, I doubt not you deserve to be so, and shall unbosom myself to you without hesitation. You are to know that matters go on just as we could wish. The Prince of Spain distinguishes me above the most assiduous of his courtiers. I had a private conversation with him this morning, wherein he expressed some disgust at being restrained by the king's avarice from following the inclinations of his liberal heart, and living on a scale befitting his august rank. On this head I chimed in with his regrets; and taking advantage of the opportunity, promised to carry him a thousand pistoles early to-morrow morning, as an earnest of larger sums with which I have engaged to feed his necessities forthwith. He was in ecstasy at my promises; and I am certain of securing his grace and favour in tail, if I can but fulfil my engagement. Acquaint my uncle with these particulars, and come back in the evening with his sentiments on the subject.

I left the Count de Lemos with the last words still quivering on his lips, and went back to the Duke of Lerma, who, on my report, sent to ask Calderona for a thousand pistoles, which he charged me to carry to the count in the evening. Away went I on my errand, muttering to myself —So, so! now I have discovered the minister's infallible receipt for the cure of all evils. Faith and troth, he is in the right; and to all appearance he may draw as copiously as he pleases from the spring, without exhausting the source. I can easily guess what bag those pistoles come from; but after all, is it not the order of nature that the parent should nurture and maintain the child? The Count de Lemos, at our parting, said to me in a low voice—Farewell, my good and worthy friend. The Prince of Spain has a little hankering after the women; we must have a little conversation on that subject one of these days; I foresee that your agency will be very applicable on that head. I returned with my head full of this last hint, which it was impossible to misinterpret. Neither did I wish to do so, for it suited my talents to a nicety. What the devil is to happen next? said I. Behold me on the point of becoming pimp to the heir of the monarchy. Whether pimping was a virtue or

a vice, I did not stop to inquire: the coarse surtout of morality would have worn but shabbily while the passions of so exalted a gallant were in the glare and glow of all their newest gloss. What a promotion for me to be the provider of pleasure to a great prince! Fair and softly, Master Gil Blas, some one may say: after all, you will be but second minister. May be so; but at the bottom the honour of both these posts is equal; the difference lies in the profit only.

While executing these honourable commissions, and getting forward daily in the good graces of the prime minister, what a happy being should I have been, if statesmen were born with a set of intestines to turn the cameleon's diet into chyle! It was more than two months since I had got rid of my grand lodging, and had taken up my quarters in a little room scarcely good enough for a banker's clerk. Though this was not quite as it should be, yet since I went out betimes in the morning, and never returned at night before bed-time, there was not much to quarrel about on that score. All day I was the hero of my own stage, or rather of the duke's. It was a principal part that I was playing. But when I retired from this brilliant theatre to my own cockloft, the great lord vanished, and poor Gil Blas was left behind, without a royal image in his pocket, and what was worse, without the means of conjuring up his glorious resemblance. Besides that it would have wounded my pride to have divulged my necessities, there was not a creature of my acquaintance who could have assisted me but Navarro, and him I had too palpably neglected since my introduction at court, to venture on soliciting his benevolence. I had been obliged to sell my wardrobe article by article. There was nothing more left than was absolutely necessary to make a decent appearance. I no longer went to the ordinary, because I had no longer wherewithal to pay my score. How then did I make shift to keep body and soul together? There was every morning, in our offices, a scanty breakfast set out, consisting of a little bread and wine; this was the whole of our commons on the minister's establishment. I never knew what it was to exceed this stint during the day, and at night I most frequently went supperless to bed.

Such was the fare of a man who made a splendid figure at court; but his illustrious fortunes, like those of other

courtiers, were more a subject of pity than of grudge. I could no longer resist the pressure of my circumstances, and ultimately resolved on their disclosure at a seasonable opportunity. By good luck such an occasion offered at the Escurial, whither the king and the Prince of Spain removed some days afterwards.

CHAPTER VI

GIL BLAS GIVES THE DUKE OF LERMA A HINT OF HIS WRETCHED CONDITION. THAT MINISTER DEALS WITH HIM ACCORDINGLY

When the king kept his court at the Escurial, all the world was at free quarters: under such easy circumstances I did not feel where the saddle galled. My bed was in a wardrobe near the duke's chamber. One morning that minister, having got up according to his cursed custom at daybreak, made me take my writing apparatus, and follow him into the palace gardens. We went and sat down under an avenue of trees; myself, as he would have it, in the posture of a man writing on the crown of his hat; his attitude was with a paper in his hand, and any one would have supposed he had been reading. At some distance, we must have looked as if the scale of Europe was to turn upon our decision; but between ourselves, who partook of it, the talk was miserably trifling.

For more than an hour had I been tickling his excellency's fancy with all the conceits, engendered by a merry nature and an eccentric course of life, when two magpies perched on the trees above us. Their clack and clatter was so obstreperous, as to force our attention whether we would or no. These birds, said the duke, seem to be in dudgeon with one another. I should like to learn the cause of their quarrel. My lord, said I, your curiosity reminds me of an Indian story in Pilpay or some other fabulist. The minister insisted on the particulars, and I related them in the following terms:

There reigned in Persia a good monarch, who not being blessed with capacities of sufficient compass to govern his dominions in his own person, left the care of them to his grand vizier. That minister, whose name was Atalmuc,

was possessed of first-rate talents. He supported the weight of that unwieldy monarchy, without sinking under the burden. He preserved it in profound peace. His art consisted in uniting the love of the royal authority with the reverence of it; while the people at large looked up to the vizier as to an affectionate father, though a devoted servant of his prince. Atalmuc had a young Cachemirian among his secretaries, by name Zeangir, to whom he was particularly attached. He took pleasure in his conversation, invited him frequently to the chase, and opened to him his most secret thoughts. One day as they were hunting together in a wood, the vizier, at the croaking of two ravens on a tree, said to his secretary—I should like to know what those birds are talking about in their jargon. My lord, answered the Cachemirian, your wishes may be fulfilled. Indeed! How so? replied Atalmuc. Because, rejoined Zeangir, a dervise read in many mysteries, has taught me the language of birds. If you wish it, I will lay my ear close to these, and will repeat to you word for word whatever they may happen to say.

The vizier agreed to the proposal. The Cachemirian got near the ravens, and affected to suck in their discourse. Then, returning to his master, My lord, said he, would you believe it? We are ourselves the topic of their talk. Impossible! exclaimed the Persian minister. Prithee now, what do they say of us? One of the two, replied the secretary, spoke thus: Here he is, the very man; the grand vizier Atalmuc, the guardian eagle of Persia, hovering over her like the parent bird over its nest, watching without intermission for the safety of its brood. For the purpose of unbending from his wearisome toils, he is hunting in this wood with his faithful Zeangir. How happy must that secretary be, to serve so partial and indulgent a master! Fair and softly, observed the other raven shrewdly, fair and softly! Make not too much parade about that Cachemirian's happiness. Atalmuc, it is true, talks and jokes familiarly with him, honours him with his confidence, and may very possibly intend to signalize his friendship by a lucrative post; but between the cup and the lip Zeangir may perish with thirst. The poor devil lodges in a ready-furnished apartment, where there is not an article of furniture for his use. In a word, he leads a starving life, with all the

paraphernalia of a plump-fed courtier. The grand vizier never troubles his head about inquiring into the right or wrong of his affairs; but satisfied with empty good wishes towards him, leaves his favourite within the ruthless gripe of poverty.

I stopped here, to see how the Duke of Lerma would take it; and he asked me with a smile what effect the fable had produced on the mind of Atalmuc; and whether the grand vizier had not felt a little offended at the secretary's presumption. No, my noble lord, answered I, with some little embarrassment at the question; historians say that his ingenuity was amply rewarded. He was more lucky than discreet, replied the duke with a serious air; there are some ministers who would esteem it no joke to be lectured at that rate. But the king will not be long before he is getting up; my duty demands my attendance. After this hint he walked off with hasty strides towards the palace without throwing away a word more upon me, and to all appearance in high dudgeon at my Indian parable.

I followed him up to the very door of his majesty's chamber, and went thence to arrange my papers in the places whence they had been taken. Then I entered a closet where our two copying secretaries were at work; for they also were of the migratory party. What is the matter with you, Signor de Santillane? said they at the sight of me. You are quite down in the mouth! Has anything untoward happened?

I was too much mortified at the ill success of my narrative, to be cautious in the expression of my grief. On the recital of what had passed with the duke, they sympathized in my disappointment. You have some reason to fret, said one of them. Heaven grant you may be better treated than a secretary of Cardinal Spinosa. This unlucky secretary, tired of working for fifteen months without pay, took the liberty of representing his necessities to his Eminence one afternoon, and of asking for a little money towards his subsistence. It is very proper, said the minister, that you should be paid. Here, pursued he, putting into his hands an order on the royal treasury for a thousand ducats; go and receive that sum; but take notice at the same time that it balances accounts between us. The secretary would have pocketed his thousand ducats without

remorse, had the thousand ducats been tangible, and the liberty of changing services secure; but just as he stepped down from the cardinal's threshold, he was tapped on the shoulder by an alguazil, and carried away to the tower of Segovia, where he has been a prisoner for a length of time.

This little historical anecdote set my teeth chattering. All was lost and gone! There was no comfort from within nor from without! My own impatience had been my ruin! just as if I had not borne starving, till patience could avail no longer. Alas! said I, wherefore must I have blurted out that ill-starred fable, which went so much against the grain of the minister? He might have been just on the point of extricating me from all my miseries; it might have been the moment of that tide in the affairs of men, which sets in for sudden and enormous elevation. What wealth, what honours have slipped through the fingers by my blunder! I ought to have been aware that great folks do not love to be forestalled, but require the common privileges of elementary subsistence to be received as favours at their hands. It would have been more prudent to have kept my lenten entertainment longer without bothering the duke about it, and even to have died with hunger, that he might be blamed for letting me.

Supposing any hope to have remained, my master, when I saw him after dinner, put an extinguisher over it at once. He was very serious with me, contrary to his usual custom, and spoke scarcely at all; an omen of dire dismay for the remainder of the evening. The night did not pass more tranquilly: the chagrin of seeing my agreeable illusions vanish, and the fear of swelling the calendar of state prisoners, left no room but for sighs and lamentations.

The following was the critical day. The duke sent for me in the morning. I went into his chamber, with the ague fit of a criminal before his judge. Santillane, said he, showing me a paper in his hand, take this order .... I shuddered at the word order, and said within myself: Oh heaven! here is the Cardinal Spinosa over again; the carriage is ordered out for Segovia. Such was my alarm at this moment, that I interrupted the minister, and throwing myself at his feet, May it please your lordship, said I, bathed in tears, I most humbly beseech your excellency to forgive

me for my boldness; necessity alone impelled me to acquaint you with my wretched circumstances.

The duke could not help laughing at my distress. Be comforted, Gil Blas, answered he, and hearken attentively. Though by betraying your necessities a reproach lights upon me for not having prevented them, I do not take it ill, my friend. I rather ought to be angry with myself for not having inquired how you were going on. But to begin making amends for my want of attention, there is an order on the royal treasury for fifteen hundred ducats, payable at sight. This is not all; I promise you the same sum annually; and moreover, when people of rank and substance shall solicit your interest, I have no objection to your addressing me on their behalf.

In the excess of joy occasioned by such tidings, I kissed the feet of the minister, who, having commanded me to rise, continued in familiar conversation. I endeavoured to rally my free and easy humour; but the transition from sorrow to rapture was too instantaneous to be natural. I felt as comical as a culprit, with a pardon singing in his ears, just when he was on the point of being launched into eternity. My master attributed all my flurry to the sole dread of having offended him; though the fear of perpetual imprisonment had its share of influence on my nerves. He owned that he had affected to look cool, to see whether I should be hurt at the alteration; that thereby he formed his opinion with respect to the liveliness of my attachment to his person, and that his own regard for me would always be proportionate.

CHAPTER VII

A GOOD USE MADE OF THE FIFTEEN HUNDRED DUCATS. A FIRST INTRODUCTION TO THE TRADE OF OFFICE, AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE PROFIT ACCRUING THEREFROM

The king, as if on purpose to play into the hands of my impatience, returned to Madrid the very next day. I flew like a harpy to the royal treasury, where they paid me down upon the nail the sum drawn for in my order. Ambition and vanity now obtained complete empire over my soul. My paltry lodging was fit only for secretaries of an inferior

cast, unpractised in the mysterious language of birds; for which reason, my grand suite of apartments fortunately being vacant, I engaged them for the second time. My next business was to send for an eminent tailor, who arrayed the pretty persons of all the fine gentlemen in town. He took my measure, and then introduced me to a draper, who sold me five ells of cloth, the exact quantity, as he said, to make a suit for a man of my size. Five ells for a light Spanish dress! Whither did this draper and tailor expect to go? .... But we must not be uncharitable. Tailors who have a reputation to support require more materials for the exercise of their genius than the vulgar snippers of the shopboard. I then bought some linen, of which I was very bare; an assortment of silk stockings, and a laced hat.

With such an equipage, there was no doing without a footman; so that I desired Vincent Ferrero, my landlord, to look out for one. Most of the foreigners who were recommended to his lodgings, on their arrival at Madrid, were wont to hire Spanish servants; and this was the means of turning his house into a register office. The first who offered was a lad of so mortified and devotional an aspect, that I would have nothing to say to him; he put me in mind of Ambrose de Lamela. I am quite out of conceit, said I to Ferrero, with these pious coat-brushers; I have been taken in by them already.

I had scarcely turned virtue in a livery out of doors, when another came upstairs. This seemed to be a good sprightly fellow, with as little mock modesty as if he had been bred at court, and a certain something about him which indicated that he did not carry principle to any dangerous excess. He was just to my mind. His answers to my questions were pat and to the purpose: he evinced a talent for intrigue beyond my most sanguine hopes. This was exactly the subject for my purpose; so I fixed him at once. Neither had I any reason to repent of my bargain; for it was very soon evident that further off I must have fared worse. As the duke had allowed me to solicit on behalf of my friends, and it was my design to push that permission to the utmost, a staunch hound was necessary to put up the game; or in phrase familiar to dull capacities, an active chap, with a turn for routing out and bringing to my market all palm-tickling

petitioners for the loaves and fishes of the prime minister. This was just where Scipio shone most; for my servant's name was Scipio. He had lived last with Donna Anna de Guevara, the Prince of Spain's nurse, where he had ample scope for the exercise of that accomplishment.

As soon as he became acquainted with my credit at court and the use to which I meant to put it, he took the field like his great ancestors, and began the campaign without the loss of a day. Master, said he, a young gentleman of Grenada is just come to Madrid; his name is Don Roger de Rada. He has been engaged in an affair of honour which compels him to throw himself on the Duke of Lerma's protection, and he is well disposed to come down handsomely for any grace and favour he may obtain. I have talked with him on the subject. He had a mind to have made friends with Don Rodrigo de Calderona, whose influence had been represented to him in magnificent terms: but I dissuaded him, by pointing out that secretary's method of selling his good offices for more than their weight in gold; whereas, on the contrary, you would be satisfied with any decent expression of gratitude for yours, and would even do the business for the mere pleasure of doing it, if you were in circumstances to follow the bent of your own generous and disinterested temper. In short, I talked to him in such a strain, that you will see the gentleman early to-morrow morning. How is all this, Master Scipio? said I. You must have transacted a great deal of business in a short time. You are no novice in back-stairs influence. It is very strange that you have not feathered your own nest. That ought not to surprise you at all, answered he. I love to make money circulate; not to hoard it up.

Don Roger de Rada came according to his appointment. I received him with a mixture of courtly plausibility and ministerial pride. My worthy sir, said I, before I engage in your interests, I wish to know the nature of the affair which brings you to court; because it may be such as to preclude me from speaking to the minister in your favour. Give me, therefore, if you please, the particulars faithfully, and rest assured that I shall enter warmly into your interests, if they are proper to be espoused by a man who moves in my sphere. My young client promised to be sincere in his representation, and began his narrative in the following words.

CHAPTER VIII

HISTORY OF DON ROGER DE RADA.

Don Anastasio de Rada, a gentleman of Grenada, was living happily in the town of Antequera, with Donna Estephania his wife, who united every charm of person and mind with the most unquestionable virtue. If her affection was lively towards her husband, his love for her was violent beyond all bounds. He was naturally prone to jealousy; and though wantonness could never assume such a semblance as his wife's, his thoughts were not quite at rest upon the subject. He was apprehensive lest some secret enemy to his repose might make some attempt upon his honour. His eye was turned askance upon all his friends, except Don Huberto de Hordales, who frequented the house without suspicion in quality of Estephania's cousin, and was the only man in whom he ought not to have confided.

Don Huberto did actually fall in love with his cousin, and ventured to make his sentiments known, in contempt of consanguinity and the ties of friendship. The lady, who was considerate, instead of making an outcry which might have led to fatal consequences, reproved her kinsman gently, representing to him the extreme criminality of attempting to seduce her and dishonour her husband, and told him very seriously that he must not flatter himself with the most distant hope.

This moderation only inflamed the seducer's appetite the more. Taking it for granted that, as a woman who had been accustomed to save appearances, she only wanted to be more strongly urged, he began to adopt little freedoms of more warmth than delicacy; and had the assurance one day to put the question home to her. She repulsed him with unbridled indignation, and threatened to refer the punishment of his offence to Don Anastasio. Her suitor, alarmed at such an intimation, promised to drop the subject; and Estephania in the candour of her soul forgave him for the past.

Don Huberto, a man totally devoid of principle, could not feel his passion to be foiled, without entertaining a mean spirit of revenge. He knew the weak side of Don Anas-

tasio's temper. This was enough to engender the blackest design that ever scoundrel plotted. One evening as he was walking alone with this misguided husband, he said with an air of extreme uneasiness: My dear friend, I can no longer live without unburdening my mind; and yet I would be for ever silent, but that you value honour far above a treacherous repose. Your acute feelings and my own, on points which concern domestic injuries, forbid me to conceal what is passing in your family. Prepare to hear what will occasion you as much grief as astonishment. I am going to wound you in the tenderest part.

I know what you mean, interrupted Don Anastasio, in the first burst of agony; your cousin is unfaithful. I no longer acknowledge her for my cousin, replied Hordales with impassioned vehemence; I disown her, as unworthy to share my friend's embraces. This is keeping me too long upon the rack, exclaimed Don Anastasio: say on, what has Estephania done? She has betrayed you, replied Don Huberto. You have a rival to whom she listens in private, but I cannot give you his name; for the adulterer, under favour of impenetrable darkness, has escaped the ken of those who watched him. All I know is, that you are duped: of that fact I am well assured. My own share in the disgrace is a sufficient pledge of my veracity. Her infidelity must be palpable indeed, when I turn Estephania's accuser.

It is to no purpose, continued he, watching the successful impression of his discourse, it is to no purpose to discuss the subject further. I perceive your indignation at the treacherous requital of your love, and your thoughts all aiming at a just revenge. Take your own course. Heed not in what relation to you your victim may stand: but convince the whole city that there is no earthly being whom you would not sacrifice to your honour.

Thus did the traitor exasperate a too credulous husband against an innocent wife; depicting in such glowing colours the infamy in which he would be plunged if he left the insult unpunished, as to heighten his anger into madness. Behold Don Anastasio, with his mind completely overturned; as if goaded by the furies. He returned homewards with the frantic design of murdering his ill-fated wife. She was just going to bed when he came in. He kept his

passion under for a time, and waited till the attendants had withdrawn. Then, unrestrained by the fear of vengeance from above, by the vulgar scorn which must recoil upon an honourable family, by natural affection for his unborn child, since his wife was near her time, he approached his victim, and said to her in a furious tone of voice: Now is your hour to die, wretch as you are! One moment only is your own, which my relenting pity leaves you to make your peace with heaven. I would not that your soul should perish eternally, though your earthly honour is for ever lost.

At these words he drew his dagger. Estephania, just speechless with terror, throwing herself at his feet, besought him with uplifted hands and inarticulate agony, to tell her why he raised his arm against her life. If he suspected her fidelity, she called heaven to attest her innocence.

In vain, in vain, replied the infuriated murderer; your treason is but too well proved. My information is not to be contradicted: Don Huberto .... Ah! my lord, interrupted she with eager haste, you must hold your trust aloof from Don Huberto. He is less your friend than you imagine. If he has said aught against my virtue, believe him not. Restrain that infamous tongue, replied Don Anastasio. By appealing against Hordales, you condemn yourself. You would ruin your relation in my esteem, because he is acquainted with your misconduct. You would invalidate his evidence against you; but the artifice is palpable, and only whets my appetite for vengeance. My dear husband, rejoined the innocent Estephania, while her tears flowed in torrents, beware of this blind rage. If you follow its instigation, you will perpetrate a deed for which you will hate yourself, when convinced of its injustice. In the name of heaven, compose your disordered spirits. At least give me time to clear up your suspicions; you will then deal candidly by a wife who has nothing to reproach herself with.

Any other than Don Anastasio would have been touched by her pleadings, and still more by her agonizing affliction; but the barbarian, far from being softened, ordered the lady once again to recommend herself briefly to mercy, and lifted his arm to strike the blow. Hold, inhuman as you are! cried she. If your love for me is as if it

hd never been, if my lavish fondness in return is all blotted
om your memory, if my tears have no eloquence to disarm
our hellish purpose, have some pity on your own blood.
aunch not your frantic hand against an innocent, who has
ot yet breathed this vital air. You cannot be its execu-
oner without the curse of heaven and earth. As for
yself, I can forgive my murderer; but the butcher of his
vn child, think deeply of it, must pay the dreadful for-
it of so detestable a deed.

Determined as Don Anastasio was to pay no attention to
nything Estephania could say, he could not help being
fected by the frightful images these last words presented
his soul. Wherefore, as if apprehensive lest nature
ould play the traitress to revenge, he hastened to make
re of his staggering resolves, and plunged his dagger into
r bosom. She fell motionless on the ground. He
ought her dead; and on that supposition left his house
mediately to be no more seen at Antequera.

In the mean time, the unhappy victim of groundless
spicion was so stunned with the blow she had received,
to remain for a short interval on the ground without
ny signs of life. Afterwards, coming to herself, she brought
old female servant to her assistance by her plaints and
mentations. That good old woman, beholding her mis-
ess in so deplorable a state, waked the whole household
hd even the neighbourhood by her cries. The room was
on filled with spectators. Surgical assistance was sent
r. The wound was probed, and pronounced not to be
ortal. Their opinion turned out to be correct; for
stephania soon recovered, and was in due time delivered
a son, notwithstanding the cruel circumstances in which
e had been placed. That son, Signor Gil Blas, you
ehold in me: I am the fruit of that dreadful pregnancy.

Women, when chaste as ice, when pure as snow, seldom
cape calumny: this plague, however, though virtue's
wry, did not alight upon my mother. The bloody scene
ssed in common fame for the transport of a jealous
sband. My father, it is true, bore the character of a
ssionate man, prone to kindle into fury on the slightest
casion. Hordales could not but suppose that his kins-
oman must suspect him of having sown wild fancies in
e mind of Don Anastasio; so that he satisfied himself

with this imperfect relish of revenge, and ceased to importune her. But, not to be tedious, I shall pass over the detail of my education. Suffice it to say, that my principal exercise was fencing, which I practised regularly in the most famous schools of Grenada and Seville. My mother waited with impatience till I was of age to measure swords with Don Huberto, that she might instruct me in the grounds of her complaint against him. In my eighteenth year she submitted her cause to my arbitrement, not without floods of tears, and every symptom of the deepest anguish. What must not a son feel, if he has the spirit and the heart of a son, at the sight of a mother in such distressing circumstances? I went immediately and called out Hordales; our place of meeting was private as it should be; we fought long and furiously; three of my thrusts took place, and I threw him to the ground, like a dead dog despised.

Don Huberto, feeling his wound to be mortal, fixed his last looks upon me, and declared that he met his death at my hands as a just punishment for his treason against my mother's honour. He owned that in revenge for the pangs of despised love he had resolved on her ruin. Thus did he breathe his last, imploring pardon from heaven, from Don Anastasio, from Estephania, and from myself. I deemed it imprudent to return home and acquaint my mother of the issue; fame was sure to perform that office for me. I passed the mountains, and repaired to Malaga, where I embarked on board a privateer. My outside not altogether indicating cowardice, the captain consented at once to enrol me among his crew.

We were not long before we went into action. Near the island of Alboutan, a corsair of Millila fell in with us, on his return towards the African coast with a Spanish vessel richly laden, taken off Carthagena. We attacked the African briskly, and made ourselves masters of both ships, with eighty Christians on board, going as slaves to Barbary. Afterwards, availing ourselves of a wind direct for the coast of Grenada, we shortly arrived at Punta de Helena.

While we were inquiring into the birth-place and condition of our rescued captives, a man about fifty, of prepossessing aspect, fell under my examination. He stated himself, with a sigh, to belong to Antequera. My heart

palpitated, without my knowing why; and my emotion, too strong to pass unnoticed, excited a visible sympathy in him. I avowed myself his townsman, and asked his family name. Alas! answered he, your curiosity makes my sorrow flow afresh. Eighteen years ago did I leave my home, where my remembrance is coupled with scenes of blood and horror. You must yourself have heard but too much of my story. My name is Don Anastasio de Rada. Merciful heaven! exclaimed I, may I believe my senses? and can this be Don Anastasio? Father! What is it you say, young man? exclaimed he in his turn, with surprise and agitation equal to my own. Are you that ill-fated infant, still in its mother's womb, when I sacrificed her to my fury? Yes, said I; none other did the virtuous Estephania bring into the world, after the fatal night when you left her weltering in her own blood.

Don Anastasio stifled my words in his embraces. For a quarter of an hour we could only mingle our inarticulate sighs and exclamations. After exhausting our tender recollections, and indulging in the wild expression of our feelings, my father lifted his eyes to heaven, in gratitude for Estephania saved; but the next moment, as if doubtful of his bliss, he demanded by what evidence his wife's innocence had been cleared. Sir, answered I, none but yourself ever doubted it. Her conduct has been uniformly spotless. You must be undeceived. Know that Don Gualberto was a traitor. In proof of this I unfolded all his perfidy, the vengeance I had taken, and his own confession before he expired.

My father was less delighted at his liberty restored than at these happy tidings. In the forgetfulness of ecstacy, he repeated all his former transports. His approbation of me was ardent and entire. Come, my son, said he, let us set out for Antequera. I burn with impatience to throw myself at the feet of a wife whom I have treated so unworthily. Since you have brought me acquainted with my own injustice, my heart has been torn by remorse.

I was too eager to bring together a couple so near and dear to me, not to expedite our journey as much as possible. I quitted the privateer, and with my share of prize-money bought two mules at Adra, my father not choosing again to incur the hazard of a voyage. He found leisure on the

road to relate his adventures, which I inclined to hear as seriously as did the Prince of Ithaca the various recitals of the king his father. At length, after several days, we halted at the foot of a mountain near Antequera. Wishing to reach home privately, we went not into the town till midnight.

You may guess my mother's astonishment at beholding a husband whom she had thought for ever lost; and the almost miraculous circumstances of his restoration were a second source of wonder. He entreated forgiveness for his barbarity with marks of repentance so lively, that she could not but be moved. Instead of looking on him as a murderer, she only saw the man to whose will high heaven had subjected her; such religion is there in the name of husband to a virtuous wife! Estephania had been so alarmed about me, that my return filled her with rapture. But her joy on this account was not without alleviation. A sister of Hordales had instituted a criminal prosecution against her brother's antagonist. The search for me was hot, so that my mother, considering home as insecure, was painfully anxious about me. It was therefore necessary to set out that very night for court, whither I come to solicit my pardon, and hope to obtain it by your generous intercession with the prime minister.

The gallant son of Don Anastasio thus closed his narrative; after which I observed, with a self-sufficient physiognomy: It is well, Signor Don Roger; the offence seems to me to be venial. I will undertake to lay the case before his excellency, and may venture to promise you his protection. The thanks my client lavished would have passed in at one ear and out at the other, if they had not been backed by assurances of more substantial gratitude. But when once that string was touched, every nerve and fibre of my frame vibrated in unison. On the very same day did I relate the whole story to the duke, who allowed me to present the gentleman, and addressed him thus: Don Roger, I have been informed of the duel which has brought you to court; Santillane has laid all the particulars before me. Make yourself perfectly easy: you have done nothing but what the circumstances of the case might almost warrant; and it is especially on the ground of wounded honour, that his Majesty is best pleased to

xtend his grace and favour. You must be committed or mere form's sake; but you may depend on it, your onfinement shall be of short duration. In Santillane ou have a zealous friend, who will watch over your nterests, and hasten your release.

Don Roger paid his respectful acknowledgments to the minister, on whose pledge he went and surrendered himself. His pardon was soon made out, owing to my activity. n less than ten days, I sent this modern Telemachus rome, to say "how do you do?" to his Ulysses and enelope; had he stood upon the merits of his case without a protector, he might have whined out a year's imrisonment, and scarcely have got off at last. My commission as but a poor hundred pistoles. It was no very magnificent haul; but I was not as yet a Calderona, to turn p my nose at the small fry.

CHAPTER IX

GIL BLAS MAKES A LARGE FORTUNE IN A SHORT TIME, AND BEHAVES LIKE OTHER WEALTHY UPSTARTS

THIS affair gave me a relish for my trade; and ten pistoles to Scipio by way of brokerage, whetted his eagerness o start more game of the same sort. I have already one justice to his talents that way; he might as modestly ave appended "the great" to the tail of his name, as the ost noted scoundrel of antiquity. The second customer e brought me was a printer, who manufactured books chivalry, and had made his fortune by waging war gainst common sense. This printer had pirated a work elonging to a brother printer, and his edition had been ized. For three hundred ducats I rescued his copies t of jeopardy, and saved him from a heavy fine. Though is was a transaction beneath the prime minister's notice, s excellency condescended at my request to interpose s authority. After the printer, a merchant passed rough my hands; the occasion was thus: A Portuguese ssel had been taken by a Barbary corsair, and re-taken a privateer from Cadiz. Two-thirds of the cargo longed to a merchant at Lisbon, who, having claimed his

due to no purpose, came to the court of Spain in search of a protector, with sufficient credit to procure him restitution. I took up his cause, and he recovered his property, deducting the sum of four hundred pistoles, paid to me in consideration of my disinterested zeal for justice.

And now most surely the reader will call out to me at this place: Well said, good master Santillane! Make hay while the sun shines. You are on the high road to fortune; push forward, and outstrip your rivals. Oh! let me alone for that. I spy, or my eyes deceive me, my servant coming in with a new gull that he has just caught. Even so! It is my very Scipio. Let us hear what he has to say. Sir, quoth he, give me leave to introduce this eminent practitioner. He wants a licence to sell his drugs during the term of ten years in all the towns of the Spanish monarchy, to the exclusion of all other quacks; in short, a monopoly of poisons. In gratitude for this patent to thin mankind, he will present the donor with a gratuity of two hundred pistoles. I looked superciliously, like a patron, at the mountebank, and told him that his business should be done. As lameness and leprosy would have it, in the course of a few days I sent him on his progress through Spain, invested with full powers to make the world his oyster, and leave nothing but the shell to his unpatented competitors.

Besides that my avarice outran my accumulating wealth, I had obtained the four boons just specified so easily from his grace, as not to be mealy-mouthed about asking for a fifth. The town of Vera, on the coast of Grenada, wanted a governor; and a knight of Calatrava wanted the government, for which he was willing to pay me one thousand pistoles. The minister was ready to burst with laughing, to see me so eager after the scut. By all the powers! my friend Gil Blas, said he, you go to work tooth and nail! You have a most inveterate itch to do as you would be done by. But mark me! When mere trifles stand between us, I shall not stand upon trifles; but when governments or other places of real value are in question, you will have the modesty to be content with half the fee for yourself, and will account to me for the other half. It is inconceivable at what expense I stand, and how it presses on my finances to support the dignity of my station; for though

disinterestedness looks vastly well in the eyes of the world, you are to understand between ourselves that I have made a solemn vow against dipping into my private fortune. On this hint, arrange your future plans.

My master, by this discourse, relieving me from the fear of being troublesome, or rather egging me on to run at the ring for every prize, made me still more worldly-minded than ever I had been before. I should not have objected to circulating hand-bills, with an invitation to all candidates for places to apply on certain terms at the secretary's office. My functions were here, Scipio's were there; and we met at the receipt of custom. My client got the government of Vera for his thousand pistoles; and as our price was fixed, a knight of St James met his brother of Calatrava in the market on an equal footing. But mere governors were paltry fish to fry; I distributed orders of knighthood, and converted some good stupid burgesses into most insufferable gentry by one stroke of the pen, and a lacing across the shoulders with a broad-sword. The clergy, too, were not forgotten in my charities. Lesser preferments were in my gift; everything up to prebendal stalls and collegiate dignities. With regard to bishoprics and archbishoprics, Don Rodrigo de Calderona had the charge of our holy religion. As church and state must always go together, supreme magistracies, commanderies, and viceroyalties were all in his gift; whence the reader will naturally infer, that the upper offices were little better tenanted than the lower ones; since the subjects on whom our election fell, establishing their pretensions on a certain palpable criterion, were not necessarily and unavoidably either the cleverest or the best-principled people in the world. We knew very well that the wits and lampooners of Madrid made themselves merry at our expense; but we borrowed our philosophy from misers, who hug themselves under the footings of the people, when they count over the accumulation of their pelf.

Isocrates was in the right to insinuate, in his elegant Greek expression, that what is got over the devil's back is spent under his belly. When I saw myself master of thirty thousand ducats, and in a fair way to gain perhaps ten times as much, it seemed to be a necessary office to make

such a figure as became the right hand of a prime minister. I took a house to myself, and furnished it in the immediate taste. I bought an attorney's carriage at second hand: he had set it up at the suggestion of vanity, and laid it down at the suggestion of his banker. I hired a coachman and three footmen. Justice demands that old and faithful servants should be promoted; I therefore invested Scipio with the threefold honour of valet-de-chambre, private secretary, and steward. But the minister raised my pride to its highest pitch, for he was pleased to allow my people to wear his livery. My poor little wits were now completely turned. I was little more in my senses than the disciples of Porcius Latro, who, by dint of drinking cummin, having made themselves as pale as their master, thought themselves every whit as learned; so I could scarcely refrain from fancying myself next of kin and presumptive heir to the Duke of Lerma himself. The populace might take me for his cousin, and people who knew better, for one of his bastards; a suspicion most flattering to my pride of blood.

Add to this, that after the example of his excellency, who kept a public table, I determined to give parties of my own. Pursuant thereunto, I commissioned Scipio to find me out a professed cook, and he stumbled upon one who might have dished up a dinner for Nomentanus, of dripping-pan notoriety. My cellar was well stored with the choicest wines. My establishment being now complete, I gave my house-warming. Every evening some of the clerks in the public offices came to sup with me, and affected a sort of political high life below-stairs. I did the honours hospitably, and always sent them home half seas over. Like master like man! Scipio, too, had his parties in the servants' hall, where he treated all his chums at my expense. But besides that I felt a real kindness for that lad, he contributed to grease the wheels of my establishment, and was entitled to have a finger in the dissipation. As a young man, some little licence was allowable; and the ruinous consequences did not strike me at the time. Another reason, too, prevented me from taking notice of it; incessant vacancies, ecclesiastical and secular, paid me amply in meal and in malt. My surplus was increasing every day. Fortune's curricle seemed to have driven to

my door, there to have broken down, and the driver to have taken shelter with me.

One thing more was wanting to my complete intoxication, that Fabricio might be witness to my pomp. He was most probably come back from Andalusia. For the fun of surprising him, I sent an anonymous note, importing that a Sicilian nobleman of his acquaintance would be glad of his company to supper, with the day, hour, and place of appointment, which was at my house. Nunez came, and was most inordinately astonished to recognize me in the Sicilian nobleman. Yes, my friend, said I, behold the master of this family. I have a retinue, a good table, and a strong box besides. Is it possible, exclaimed he with vivacity, that all this opulence should be yours? It was well done in me to have placed you with Count Galiano. I told you beforehand that he was a generous nobleman, and would not be long before he set you at your ease. Of course you followed my wise advice, in giving the rein a little more freely to your servants; you find the benefit of it. It is only by a little mutual accommodation, that the principal officers in great houses feather their nests so comfortably.

I suffered Fabricio to go on as long as he liked, complimenting himself for having introduced me to Count Galiano. When he had done, to chastise his ecstasies at having procured me so good a post, I stated at full length the returns of gratitude with which that nobleman had recompensed my services. But, perceiving how ready my poet was to string his lyre to satire at my recital, I said to him—The Sicilian's contemptible conduct I readily forgive. Between ourselves, it is more a subject of congratulation than of regret. If the count had dealt honourably by me, I should have followed him into Sicily, where I should still be in a subordinate capacity, waiting for dead men's shoes. In a word, I should not now have been hand in glove with the Duke of Lerma.

Nunez felt so strange a sensation at these last words, that he was tongue-tied for some seconds. Then gulping up his stammering accents like harlequin, Did I hear aright? said he. What! you hand in glove with the prime minister. I on one side, and Don Rodrigo de Calderona on the other, answered I; and according to all ap-

pearance, my fortunes will move higher. Truly, replied he, this is admirable. You are cut out for every occasion. What an universal genius! To borrow an expression from the tennis-court, you have a racket for every ball; nothing comes amiss to you. At all events, my lord, I am sincerely rejoiced at your lordship's prosperity. The deuce and all, Master Nunez! interrupted I; good now, dispense with your lords and lordships. Let us banish such formalities, and live on equal terms together. You are in the right, replied he; altered circumstances should not make strange faces. I will own my weakness; when you announced your elevation you took away my breath; but the chill and the shudder are over, and I see only my old friend Gil Blas.

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of four or five clerks. Gentlemen, said I, introducing Nunez, you are to sup with Signor Don Fabricio, who writes verses of impenetrable sublimity, and such prose as would not know itself in the glass. Unluckily I was talking to gentry who would have had more fellow-feeling with an Oran Outang than with a poet. They scarcely condescended to look at him. In vain did he pun, parody, rally, or rail to hit their fancies, for they had none. He was so nettled at their indifference, that he assumed the poetic licence, and made his escape. Our clerks never missed him, but forgot at once that he had been there.

Just as I was going out the next morning, the poet of the Asturias came into my room. I beg pardon, said he, for having cut your clerks so abruptly last night; but, to deal freely, I was so much out of my element, that I should soon have played old chaos with them. Proud puppies, with their starch and self-important air! I cannot conceive how a clever fellow like you can sit it out with such loutish guests. To-day I will bring you some of more life and spirit. I shall be very much obliged to you, answered I; your introduction is sufficient. Exactly so, replied he. You shall have the feast of reason and the flow of soul. I will go forthwith and invite them, for fear they should engage themselves elsewhere; for happy man be his dole who can get them to dinner or supper; they are such excellent company!

Away went he; and in the evening, at supper-time,

returned with six authors in his train, whom he presented one after another with a set speech in their praise. According to his account, the wits of Greece and Italy were nothing in comparison of these, whose works ought to be printed in letters of gold. I received this deputation from the tuneful sisters very politely. My behaviour was even in the extravagance of good breeding; for the republic of authors is a little monarchical in its demands upon our flattery. Though I had given Scipio no express direction respecting the number of covers at this entertainment, yet knowing what a hungry and voluptuous race were to be crammed, he had mustered the courses in more than their full complement.

At length supper was announced, and we fell to merrily. My poets began talking of their poems and themselves. One fellow, with the most lyrical assurance, numbered up whole hosts of first-rate nobility and high-flying dames, who were quite enraptured with his muse. Another, though it was not for him to arraign the choice which a learned society had lately made of two new members, could not help saying that it was strange they should not have elected him. All the rest were much in the same story. Amid the clatter of knives and forks, my ears were more discordantly dinned with verses and harangues. They each took it by turns to give me a specimen of their composition. One languishes out a sonnet; another mouths a scene in a tragedy; and a third reads a melancholy criticism on the province of comedy. The next in turn spouts an ode of Anacreon, translated into most un-anacreontic Spanish verse. One of his brethren interrupts him, to point out the unclassical use of a particular phrase. The author of the version by no means acquiesces in the remark; hence arises an argument, in which all the literati take one side or the other. Opinions are nearly balanced; the disputants are nearly in a passion; as argument weakens, invective grows stronger; they get from bad to worse; over goes the table, and up jump they to fisty-cuffs. Fabricio, Scipio, my coachman, my footman, and myself, have scarcely lungs or strength to bring them to their senses. The moment the battle was over, off scampered they as if my house had been a tavern, without the slightest apology for their ill behaviour.

Nunez, on whose word I had anticipated a very pleasant party, looked rather blue at this conclusion. Well, my friend, said I, what do you think of your literary acquaintance now? As sure as Apollo is on Parnassus, you brought me a most blackguard set. I will stick to my clerks; so talk no more to me about authors. I shall take care, answered he, not to invite any of them to a gentleman's house again; for these are the most select and well-mannered of the tribe.

CHAPTER X

THE MORALS OF GIL BLAS BECOME AT COURT MUCH AS IF THEY HAD NEVER BEEN AT ALL. A COMMISSION FROM THE COUNT DE LEMOS, WHICH, LIKE MOST COURT COMMISSIONS, IMPLIES AN INTRIGUE

WHEN once my name was up for a man after the Duke of Lerma's own heart, I had very soon my court about me. Every morning was my ante-chamber crowded with company, and my levees were all the fashion. Two sorts of customers came to my shop; one set, to engage my interposition with the minister, on fair commercial principles; the other set, to excite my compassion by pathetic statements of their cases, and give me a lift to heaven on the packhorse of charity. The first were sure of being heard patiently and served diligently; with regard to the second order, I got rid of them at once by plausible evasions, or kept them dangling till they wore their patience threadbare, and went off in a huff. Before I was about the court my nature was compassionate and charitable; but tenderness of heart is an unfashionable frailty there, and mine became harder than any flint. Here was an admirable school to correct the romantic sensibilities of friendship: nor was my philosophy any longer assailable in that quarter. My manner of dealing with Joseph Navarro, under the following circumstances, will prove more than volumes on that head.

This Navarro, the founder of my fortune, to whom my obligations were thick and threefold, paid me a visit one day. With the warmest expressions of regard such as he was in the habit of lavishing, he begged me to ask the Duke of Lerma for a certain situation for one of his friends, a

young man of excellent qualities and undoubted merit, but incumbered with an inability of getting on in the world. I am well assured, added Joseph, that with your good and obliging disposition, you will be enraptured to confer a favour on a worthy man with a very slender purse; I am sure you will feel obliged to me for giving you an opportunity of carrying your benevolent inclinations into effect. This was just as good as telling me that the business was to be done for nothing. Though such doctrine was not quite level to my capacity, I still affected a wish to do as he desired. It gives me infinite pleasure, answered I to Navarro, to have it in my power to evince my lively sense of all your former kindness to me. It is enough for you to take any man living by the hand; from that moment he becomes the object of my unwearied care. Your friend shall have the situation you want for him; nay, he has it already: it is no longer any concern of yours; leave it entirely to me.

On this assurance Joseph went away in high glee; nevertheless, the person he recommended had not the post in question. It was given to another man, and my strong box was the stronger by a thousand ducats. This sum was infinitely preferable to all the thanks in the world, so that I looked pitifully blank when next we met, saying—Ah, my dear Navarro! you should have thought of speaking to me sooner. That Calderona got the start of me; he has given away a certain thing that shall be nameless. I am vexed to the soul not to meet you with better tidings.

Joseph was fool enough to give me credit, and we parted better friends than ever; but I suspect that he soon found out the truth, for he never came near me again. This was just what I wanted. Besides that the memory of benefits received grated harshly, it would not have been at all the thing for a person in my then sphere to keep company with a certain description of people.

The Count de Lemos has been long in the background, let us bring him a little forwarder on the canvas. We met occasionally. I had carried him a thousand pistoles, as the reader will recollect; and I now carried him a thousand more, by order of his uncle the duke, out of his excellency's funds lying in my hands. On this occasion the Count de Lemos honoured me with a long conference. He

informed me that at length he had completely gained his end, and was in unrivalled possession of the Prince of Spain's good graces, whose sole confidant he was. His next concern was to invest we with a right honourable commission, of which he had already given me a hint. Friend Santillane, said he, now is the time to strike while the iron is hot. Spare no pains to find out some young beauty, worthy to while away the prince's amorous hours. You have your wits about you; and a word to the wise is sufficient. Go; run about the town; pry into every hole and corner; and when you have pounced upon anything likely to suit, you will come and let me know. I promised the count to leave no stone unturned in the due discharge of my employment, which seemed to require no great force of genius, since the professors of the science are so numerous.

I had not hitherto been much practised in such delicate investigations, but it was more than probable that Scipio had, and that his talent lay peculiarly that way. On my return home I called him in, and spoke thus to him in private: My good fellow, I have a very important secret to impart. Do you know that in the midst of fortune's favours, there is something still wanting to crown all my wishes? I can easily guess what that is, interrupted he, without giving me time to finish what I was going to say; you want a little snug bit of contraband amusement, to keep you awake of evenings, and rub off the dust of business. And, in fact, it is a marvellous thing that you should have played the Joseph in the heyday of your blood, when so many greybeards around you are playing the Elder. I admire the quickness of your apprehension, replied I with a smile. Yes, my friend, a mistress is that something still wanting; and you shall choose for me. But I forewarn you that I am nice hungry, and must have a pretty person, with more than passable manners. The sort of thing that you require, returned Scipio, is not always to be met with in the market. Yet, as luck will have it, we are in a town where everything is to be got for money, and I am in hopes that your commission will not hang long on hand.

Accordingly within three days he pulled me by the sleeve: I have discovered a treasure! a young lady whose name is Catalina, of good family and matchless beauty, living with her aunt in a small house, where they make both

ends meet by clubbing their little matters, and set the slanderous world at defiance. Their waiting-maid, a girl of my acquaintance, has given me to understand that their door, though barred against all impertinent intruders, would turn upon its hinges to a rich and generous suitor, if he would only consent, for fear of prying neighbours, not to pay his visits till after night-fall, and then in the most private manner possible. Hereupon I magnified you as the properest gentleman in the world, and intreated piety in pattens to offer your humble services to the ladies. She promised to do so, and to bring me back my answer to-morrow morning at an appointed place. That is all very well, answered I; but I am afraid your goddess of bed-making has been running her rig upon you. No, no, replied he, old birds are not to be caught with chaff; I have already made inquiry in the neighbourhood, and by the general report of her, Signora Catalina is a second Danae, on whom you will have the happiness of coming down,

> Like Jove descending from his tower,
> To court her in a silver shower.

Out of conceit as I was with the intrinsic value of ladies' favours, this was not to be scoffed at; and as our Mercury in petticoats came the next day to tell Scipio that it only depended on me to be introduced that very evening, I dropped in between eleven and twelve o'clock. The knowing one received me without bringing a candle, and led me by the hand into a very neat apartment, where the two ladies were sitting on a satin sofa, dressed in the most elegant taste. As soon as they saw me enter, they got up and welcomed me in a style of such superior breeding, as would not have disgraced the highest rank. The aunt, whose name was Signora Mencia, though with the remains of beauty, had no attractions for me. But the niece had a million, for she was a goddess in mortal form. And yet, to examine her critically, she could not have been admitted for a perfect beauty; but then there was a charm above all rules of symmetry, with a tingling and luxurious warmth about her, that seized on men's hearts through their eyes, and prevented their brains from being too busy.

Neither were my senses proof against so dazzling a dis-

play. I forgot my errand as proxy, and spoke on my own private individual account, with the enthusiasm of a raw recruit in the tender passion. The dear little creature, whose wit sounded in my ears with three times its actual acuteness, under favour of her natural endowments, made a complete conquest of me by her prattle. I began to launch out into foolish raptures, when the aunt, to bring me to my bearings, led the conversation to the point in hand: Signor de Santillane, I shall deal very explicitly with you. On the high encomiums I have heard of your character, you have been admitted here, without the affectation of making much ado about trifles: but do not imagine that your views are the nearer their termination for that. Hitherto I have brought my niece up in retirement, and you are, as it were, the very first male creature on whom she has ever set eyes. If you deem her worthy of being your wife, I shall feel myself highly honoured by the alliance: it is for you to consider whether those terms suit you; but you cannot have her on cheaper.

This was proceeding to business with a vengeance! It put little Cupid to flight at once: or else he was just going to try one of his sharpest arrows upon me. But a truce with the Pantheon! A marriage so bluntly proposed dispelled the fairy vision: I sunk back at once into the count's plodding agent; and changing my tone, answered Signora Mencia thus: Madam, your frankness delights me, and I will meet it half-way. Whatever rank I may hold at court, lower than the highest is too low for the peerless Catalina. A far more brilliant offer waits her acceptance; the Prince of Spain shall be thrown into her toils. Surely it was enough to have refused my niece, replied the aunt sarcastically; such compliments are sufficiently unpleasing to our sex; it could not be necessary to make us your unfeeling sport. I really am not in so merry a mood, madam! exclaimed I: it is a plain matter of fact; I am commissioned to look out for a young lady of merit sufficient to engage the prince's heart, and receive his private visits; the object of my search is in your house, and here his royal highness shall fix his quarters.

Signora Mencia could scarcely believe her ears; neither were they grievously offended. Nevertheless, thinking it decent to be startled at the immorality of the proceeding,

she replied to the following effect: Though I should give implicit credit to what you tell me, you must understand that I am not of a character to take pleasure in the infamous distinction of seeing my niece a prince's concubine. Every feeling of virtue and of honour revolts at the idea.... What a simpleton you are with your virtue and honour! interrupted I. You have not a notion above the level of a tradesman's wife. Was there ever anything so stupid as to consider affairs of this kind with a view to their moral tendency? It is stripping them of all their beauty and excellence. In the magic lanthorn of plenty, pleasure, and preferment, they appear with all their brightest gloss. Figure to yourself the heir to the monarchy at the happy Catalina's feet; fancy him all rapture and lavish bounty; nor doubt but that from her shall spring a hero, who shall immortalize his mother's name, by enrolling his own in the unperishable records of eternal fame.

Though the aunt desired no better sport than to take me at my word, she affected not to know what she had best do; and Catalina, who longed to have a grapple with the Prince of Spain, affected not to care about the matter; which made it necessary for me to press the siege closer; till at length Signora Mencia, finding me chop-fallen and ready to withdraw my forces, sounded a parley, and agreed to a convention, containing the two following articles. *Imprimis*, if the Prince of Spain, on the fame of Catalina's charms, should take fire, and determine to pay her a nightly visit, it should be my care to let the ladies know when they might expect him. *Secondo*, that the prince should be introduced to the said ladies as a private gentleman, accompanied only by himself and his principal purveyor.

After this capitulation, the aunt and niece were upon the best terms possible with me: they behaved as if we had known one another from our cradles; on the strength of which I ventured on some little familiarities, which were not taken at all unkindly; and when we parted, they embraced me of their own accord, and slabbered me over with inexpressible fondness. It is marvellous to think with what facility a tender connection is formed between persons in the same line of trade, but of opposite sexes. It might have been suspected by an eye-witness of my

departure, in all the plenitude of warm and repeated salutation, that my visit had been more successful than it was.

The Count de Lemos was highly delighted when I announced the long-expected discovery. I spoke of Catalina in terms which made him long to see her. The following night I took him to her house, and he owned that I had beat the bush to some purpose. He told the ladies, he had no doubt but the Prince of Spain would be fully satisfied with my choice of a mistress, who, on her part, would have reason to be well pleased with such a lover; that the young prince was generous, good-tempered, and amiable; in short, he promised in a few days to bring him in the mode they enjoined, without retinue or publicity. That nobleman then took leave of them, and I withdrew with him. We got into his carriage, in which we had both driven thither, and which was waiting at the end of the street. He set me down at my own door, with a special charge to inform his uncle next day of the new game started, not forgetting to impress strongly how conducive a good bag of pistoles would be to the successful accomplishment of the adventure.

I did not fail on the following morning to go and give the Duke of Lerma an exact account of all that had passed. There was but one thing kept back. I did not mention Scipio's name, but took credit to myself for the discovery of Catalina. One makes a merit of any dirty work in the service of the great.

Abundant were the compliments paid me on this occasion. My good friend Gil Blas, said the minister with a bantering air, I am delighted that with all your talents you have that besides of discovering kind-hearted beauties; whenever I have occasion for such an article, you will have the goodness to supply me. My lord, answered I with mock gravity like his own, you are very obliging to give me the preference; but it may not be unseasonable to observe that there would be an indelicacy in my administering to your excellency's pleasures of this description. Signor Don Rodrigo has been so long in possession of that post about your person, that it would be manifest injustice to rob him of it. The duke smiled at my answer; and then changing the subject, asked whether his nephew did not want money for this new speculation. Excuse my negligence! said I; he will thank you to send him a thousand pistoles. Well

and good! replied the minister; you will furnish him accordingly, with my strict injunction not to be niggardly, but to encourage the prince in whatever pleasurable expenses his heart may prompt him to indulge.

CHAPTER XI

THE PRINCE OF SPAIN'S SECRET VISIT, AND PRESENTS TO CATALINA

I WENT to the Count de Lemos on the spur of the occasion, with five hundred double pistoles in my hand. You could not have come at a better time, said that nobleman. I have been talking with the prince; he has taken the bait, and burns with impatience to see Catalina. This very night he intends to slip privately out of the palace, and pay her a visit; it is a measure determined on, and our arrangements are already made. Give notice to the ladies, through the medium of the cash you have just brought; it is proper to let them know they have no ordinary lover to receive; and a matter of course that generosity in princes should be the herald of their partialities. As you will be of our party, take care to be in the way at bed-time: and as your carriage will be wanted, let it wait near the palace about midnight.

I immediately repaired to the ladies. Catalina was not visible, having just gone to lie down. I could only speak with Signora Mencia. Madam, said I, forgive my appearance here in the day-time, but there was no avoiding it; you must know that the Prince of Spain will be with you to-night; and here, added I, putting my pecuniary credentials into her hand, here is an offering which he lays on the Cytherean shrine, to propitiate the divinities of the temple. You may perceive, I have not entangled you in a sleeveless concern. You have been excessively kind indeed, answered she; but tell me, Signor de Santillane, does the prince love music? To distraction, replied I. There is nothing he so much delights in as a fine voice, with a delicate lute accompaniment. So much the better, exclaimed she in a transport of joy; you give me great pleasure by saying so; for my niece has the pipe of a nightingale, and plays exquisitely on the lute: then her dancing is in the finest style! Heavens

and earth! exclaimed I in my turn, here are accomplishments by wholesale, aunt; more than enough to make any girl's fortune! Any one of those talents would have been a sufficient dowry.

Having thus smoothed his reception, I waited for the prince's bed-time. When it was near at hand, I gave my coachman his orders, and went to the Count de Lemos, who told me that the prince, the sooner to get rid of the people about him, meant to feign a slight indisposition, and even to go to bed, the better to cajole his attendants; but that he would get up an hour afterwards, and go through a private door to a back staircase leading into the court-yard.

Conformably with their previous arrangements, he fixed my station. There had I to beat the hoof so long, that I began to suspect our forward sprig of royalty had gone another way, or else had changed his mind about Catalina; just as if princes ever began to be fickle, till the goad of novelty and curiosity began to be blunted. In short, I thought they had forgotten me, when two men came up. Finding them to be my party, I led the way to my carriage, into which they both got, and I upon the coach-box to direct the driver, whom I stopped fifty yards from the house, whither we walked. The door opened at our approach, and shut again as soon as we got in.

At first we were in absolute darkness, as on my former visit, though a small lamp was fixed to the wall on the present occasion. But the light which it shed was so faint, as only to render itself visible without assisting us. All this served only to heighten the romance in the fancy of its hero, fixed as he was in steadfast gaze at the sight of the ladies as they received him in a saloon whose brilliant illumination was more dazzling, when contrasted with the gloom of the avenue. The aunt and niece were in a tempting undress, where the science of coquetry was displayed in all its luxury and absolute sway. Our prince could have been happy with Signora Mencia, had the dear charmer Catalina been away; but as there was a choice, the younger, according to the rules of precedency in the court of Cupid, had the preference.

Well! prince, said the Count de Lemos, could you have desired a better specimen of beauty? They are both en-

chanting, answered the prince, and my heart may as well surrender at once; for the aunt would arrest it in its flight, if it attempted to sound a retreat from the niece's all-subduing charms.

After such compliments, as do not fall by wholesale to the share of aunts, he addressed his choicest terms of flattery to Catalina, who answered him in kind. As convenient personages of my stamp are allowed to mingle in the conversation of lovers, for the purpose of making fire hotter, I introduced the subject of singing and playing on the lute. This was the signal of fresh rapture! and the nymph, the muse, the anything but mortal, was supplicated to outtune the jingle of the spheres. She complied like a good-humoured goddess; played some tender airs, and sung so deliciously, that the prince flopped down on his knees in a tumult of love and pleasure. But scenes like these are vapid in description: suffice it to say that hours glided away like moments in this sweet delirium, till the approach of day warned the sober plotters of the lunacy to provide for their patient's safety, and their own. When the parties were all snugly housed, we gave ourselves as much credit for the negotiation as if we had patched up a marriage with a princess.

The next morning the Duke of Lerma desired to know all the particulars. Just as I had finished relating them, the Count de Lemos came in and said—The Prince of Spain is so engrossed by Catalina; he has taken so decided a fancy to her, that he actually proposes to be constant. He wanted to have sent her jewels to the amount of two thousand pistoles to-day, but his finances were aground. My dear Lemos, said he, addressing himself to me, you must absolutely get me that sum. I know it is very inconvenient; you have pawned your credit for me already, but my heart owns itself your debtor; and if ever I have the means of returning your kindness by more than empty words, your fortunes shall not suffer by your complaisance. In answer, I assured him that I had friends and credit, and promised to bring him what he wanted.

There is no difficulty about that, said the duke to his nephew. Santillane will bring you the money; or, to save trouble, he may purchase the jewels, for he is an admirable judge, especially of rubies. Are you not, Gil Blas? This stroke of satire was of course designed to entertain the

count at my expense, and it was successful, for his curiosity could not but be excited to know the meaning of the mystery. No mystery at all, replied his uncle with a broad laugh. Only Santillane took it into his head one day to exchange a diamond for a ruby, and the barter operated equally to the advantage of his pocket and his penetration.

Had the minister stopped there, I should have come off cheaply; but he took the trouble of dressing out in aggravated colours the trick that Camilla and Don Raphael played me, with a most provoking enlargement of the circumstances most to the disadvantage of my sagacity. His excellency having enjoyed his joke, ordered me to attend the Count de Lemos to a jeweller's, where we selected trinkets for the Prince of Spain's inspection, and they were intrusted to my care to be delivered to Catalina.

There can be little doubt of my kind reception on the following night, when I displayed a fine pair of drop earrings, as the presents of my embassy. The two ladies, out of their wits at these costly tokens of the prince's love, suffered their tongues to run into a gossiping strain, while they were thanking me for introducing them into such worshipful society. In the excess of their joy, they forgot themselves a little. There escaped now and then certain peculiar idioms of speech, which made me suspect that the party in question was no such dainty morsel for royalty to feed upon. To ascertain precisely what degree of obligation I had conferred on the heir-apparent, I took my leave with the intention of coming to a right understanding with Scipio.

CHAPTER XII

CATALINA'S REAL CONDITION A WORRY AND ALARM TO GIL BLAS. HIS PRECAUTIONS FOR HIS OWN EASE AND QUIET

On coming home, I heard a devil of a noise, and inquired what was the meaning of it. They told me that Scipio was giving a supper to half-a-dozen of his friends. They were singing as loud as their lungs could roar, and threatening the stability of the house with their protracted peals of

daughter. This meal was not in all respects the banquet of the seven wise men.

The founder of the feast, informed of my arrival, said to his company: Sit still, gentlemen, it is only the master of the house come home, but that need not disturb you. Go on with your merry-making; I will but just whisper a word in his ear, and be back again in a moment. He came to me accordingly. What an infernal din! said I. What sort of company do you keep below? Have you, too, got in among the poets? Thank you for nothing! answered he. Your wine is too good to be given to such gentry; I turn it to better account. There is a young man of large property in my party, who wishes to lay out your credit and his own money in the purchase of a place. This little festivity is all for him. For every glass he fills, I put on ten pistoles, in addition to the regular fee. He shall drink till he is under the table. If that is the case, replied I, go to your presidentship, and do not spare the cellar.

Then was no proper time to talk about Catalina; but the next morning I opened the business thus: Friend Scipio, the terms we are upon entitle me to fair dealing. I have treated you more like an equal than a servant, consequently you would be much to blame to cheat me on the footing of a master. Let us, therefore, have no secrets towards each other. I am going to tell you what will surprise you; and you on your part shall give me your sincere opinion about the two women with whom you have brought me acquainted. Between ourselves, I suspect them to be no better than they should be; with so much the more of the knave in their composition, because they affect the simpleton. If my conjecture be right, the Prince of Spain has no great reason to be delighted with my activity; for I will own to you frankly, that it was for him I spoke to you about a mistress. I brought him to see Catalina, and he is over head and ears in love with her. Sir, answered Scipio, you have dealt so handsomely by me, that I shall act upon the square with you. I had yesterday a private interview with the abigail, and she gave me a most entertaining history of the family. You shall have it briefly, though it did not come briefly to me.

Catalina was daughter to a sort of gentleman in Arragon. An orphan at fifteen, with no fortune but a pretty face, she

lent a complying ear to an officer who carried her off to Toledo, where he died in six months, having been more like a father than a husband to her. She collected his effects together, consisting of their joint wardrobe and three hundred pistoles in ready money, and then went to housekeeping with Signora Mencia, who was still in fashion, though a little on the wane. These sisters, every way but in blood, began at length to attract the attention of the police. The ladies took umbrage at this, and decamped in dudgeon for Madrid, where they have been living for these two years, without making any acquaintance in the neighbourhood. But now comes the best of the joke: they have taken two small houses adjoining each other, with a passage of communication through the cellars. Signora Mencia lives with a servant girl in one of these houses, and the officer's widow inhabits the other, with an old duenna, whom she passes off for her grandmother, so that her versatile child of nature is sometimes a niece brought up by her aunt, and sometimes an orphan under her grandam's fostering wing. When she enacts the niece, her name is Catalina; and when she personates the granddaughter, she calls herself Sirena.

At the grating sound of Sirena I turned pale, and interrupted Scipio, saying—What do you tell me? Alas! it must be so: This cursed imp of Arragon is Calderona's charming Siren. To be sure she is, answered he, the very same! I thought you would be delighted at the news. Quite the reverse, replied I. It portends more sorrow than laughter; do not you anticipate the consequences? None of any ill omen, rejoined Scipio. What is there to be afraid of? It is not certain that Don Rodrigo will rub his forehead; and in case any good-natured friend should show it him in the glass, you had better let the minister into the secret beforehand. Tell him all the circumstances straightforward as they happened; he will see that there has been no trick on your part; and if after that Calderona should attempt to do you an ill office with his excellency, it will be as clear as daylight that he is only actuated by a spirit of revenge.

Scipio removed all my apprehensions by this advice, which I followed, in acquainting the Duke of Lerma at once with this unlucky discovery. My aspect, while telling my tale, was sorrowful, and my tone faltering, in evidence of my

ntrition for having unadvisedly brought the prince and on Rodrigo into such close quarters; but the minister was ore disposed to roast his favourite than to pity him. deed, he ordered me to let the matter take its own course, nsidering it as a feather in Calderona's cap to dispute the pire of love with so illustrious a rival, and not to be orse used than his lawful prince. The Count de Lemos, o, was informed how things stood, and promised me his otection, if the first secretary should come at the knowdge of the intrigue, and attempt to undermine me with the ike.

Trusting to have secured the frail bark of my fortunes by is notable contrivance from the rocks and quicksands at threatened it, my mind was once more at rest. I conued attending the prince on his visits to Catalina, sirenke in nature as in nickname, who was fertile in quaint vices to keep Don Rodrigo away from next door, whener the course of business required her to devote her nights his royal competitor.

CHAPTER XIII

GIL BLAS GOES ON PERSONATING THE GREAT MAN. HE HEARS NEWS OF HIS FAMILY: A TOUCH OF NATURE ON THE OCCASION. A GRAND QUARREL WITH FABRICIO

I MENTIONED some time ago, that in the morning there as usually a crowd of people in my ante-chamber, coming negotiate little private concerns in the way of politics; ut I would never suffer them to open their business by word f mouth; but adopting court precedent, or rather giving yself the airs of a jack in office, my language to every itor was—Send in a memorial on the subject. My tongue an so glibly to that tune, that one day I gave my landlord ne official answer, when he came to put me in mind of a velvemonth's rent in arrear. As for my butcher and aker, they spared the trouble of asking for their memorials y never giving me time to run up a bill. Scipio, who imicked me so exactly, that only those behind the scenes uld distinguish the double from the principal performer, eld his head just as high with the poor devils who curried

favour with him, as a step of the ladder to my ministerial patronage.

There was another foolish trick of mine, of which I do not by any means pretend to make a merit; neither more nor less than the extreme assurance of talking about the first nobility, just as if I had been one of their kidney. Suppose, for example, the Duke of Alva, the Duke of Ossuna, or the Duke of Medina Sidonia were mentioned in conversation, I called them without ceremony, my friend Alva, that good-natured fellow Ossuna, or that comical dog Medina Sidonia. In a word, my pride and vanity had swelled to such a height, that my father and mother were no longer among the number of my honoured relatives. Alas! poor under-strappers, I never thought of asking whether you had sunk or were swimming in the Asturias. A thought about you never came into my head. The court has all the soporific virtues of Lethe, in the case of poor relations.

My family was completely obliterated from the tablets of my memory, when one morning a young man knocked at my door and begged to speak with me for a moment in private. He was shown into my closet, where, without asking him to take a chair, as he seemed to be quite a common fellow, I desired to know abruptly what he wanted. How! Signor Gil Blas? said he, do you not remember me? It was in vain that I perused the lines of his face over and over again; I was obliged to tell him fairly that he had the advantage of me. Why, I am one of your old schoolfellows! replied he, bred and born in Oviedo; Bertrand Muscada, the grocer's son, next-door neighbour to your uncle the canon. I recollect you as well as if it was but yesterday. We have played a thousand times together at blind man's buff and prison bars.

My youthful recollections, answered I, are very transient and confused. Blind man's buff and prison bars are but childish amusement! The burden of state affairs leaves me little time to ruminate on the trifles of my younger days. I am come to Madrid, said he, to settle accounts with my father's correspondent. I heard talk of you! Folks say that you have a good berth at court, and are already almost as well off as a Jew broker. I thought I would just call in and say, how d'ye do? On my return into the country,

your family will jump out of their skins for joy, when they hear how famously you are getting on.

It was impossible in decency to avoid asking how my father, my mother, and my uncle stood in the world; but that duty was performed in so gingerly a manner, as to leave the grocer little room to compliment dame Nature on her liberal provision of instinct. He seemed quite shocked at my indifference for such near kindred, and told me bluntly, with his coarse shopman's familiarity, Methinks you might have shown more heartiness and natural feeling for your kinsfolk! Why, you ask after them just as if they were vermin! Your father and mother are still at service; take that in your dish! And the good canon, Gil Perez, eat up with gout, rheumatism, and old age, has one foot in the grave. People should feel as people ought; and seeing that you are in a berth to be a blessing to your poor parents, take a friend's advice, and allow them two hundred pistoles a year. That will be doing a handsome thing, and making them comfortable, and then you may spend the rest upon yourself with a good conscience. Instead of being softened by this family picture, I only resented the officiousness of unasked advice. A more delicate and covert remonstrance might perhaps have made its impression, but so bold a rebuke only hardened my heart. My sulky silence was not lost upon him, so that while he moralized himself out of charity into downright abuse, my choler began to overflow. Nay, then! this is too much, answered I, in a devil of a passion. Get about your business, Master Muscada, and mind your own shop. You are a pretty fellow to preach to me! As if I were to be taught my duty by you. Without further parley I handed the grocer out of my closet by the shoulder, and sent him off to weigh figs and nutmegs at Oviedo.

The home-strokes he had laid on were not lost to my sober recollection. My neglect of filial piety struck home to my heart, and melted me into tears. When I recollected how much my childhood was indebted to my parents, what pains they had taken in my education, these affecting thoughts gave language for the moment to the still small voice of nature and gratitude; but the language was never translated into solid sense and service. An habitual callousness succeeded this transient sensation, and peremptorily

cancelled every obligation of humanity. There are many fathers besides mine, who will acknowledge this portrait of their sons.

Avarice and ambition, dividing me between them, annihilated every trace of my former temper. I lost all my gaiety, became absent and moping,—in short, a most unsociable animal. Fabricio seeing me so furiously bent on accumulation, and so perfectly indifferent to him, very rarely came to see me. He could not help saying one day: In truth, Gil Blas, you are quite an altered man. Before you were about the court, you were always pleasant and easy. Now you are all agitation and turmoil. You form project after project to make a fortune, and the more you realize, the wider your views of aggrandizement extend. But this is not the worst! You have no longer that expansion of heart, those open manners, which form the charm of friendship. On the contrary, you wrap yourself round, and shut the avenues of your heart even to me. In your very civilities, I detect the violence you impose upon yourself. In short, Gil Blas is no longer the same Gil Blas whom I once knew.

You really have a most happy talent for bantering, answered I, with repulsive jocularity. But this metamorphose into the shag of a savage is not perceptible to myself. Your own eyes, replied he, are insensible to the change, because they are fascinated. But the fact remains the same. Now, my friend, tell me fairly and honestly, shall we live together as heretofore? When I used to knock at your door in the morning, you came and opened it yourself, between asleep and awake, and I walked in without ceremony. Now, what a difference! You have an establishment of servants. They keep me cooling my heels in your ante-chamber; my name must be sent in before I can speak to you. When this is got over, what is my reception? A cold inclination of the head, and the insolent strut of office. Any one would suppose that my visits were growing troublesome! Can you suppose this to be treatment for a man who was once on equal terms with you? No, Santillane, it can never be, nor will I bear it longer. Farewell! Let us part without ill blood. We shall both be better asunder; you will get rid of a troublesome censor, and I of a purse-proud upstart who does not know himself.

I felt myself more exasperated than reformed by his reproaches; and suffered him to take his departure without the slightest effort to overcome his resolution. In the present temper of my mind, the friendship of a poet did not seem a catch of sufficient importance to break one's heart about its loss. I found ample amends in the intimacy of some subaltern attendants about the king's person, with whom a similarity of humour had lately connected me closely. These new acquaintance of mine were for the most part men from no one knows where, pushed up to their appointments more by luck than merit. They had all got into warm berths; and, wretches as they were, measuring their own consequence by the excess of royal bounty, forgot their origin as scandalously as I forgot mine. We gave ourselves infinite credit for what told so much and bitterly to our disgrace. O fortune! what a jade you are, to distribute your favours at hap-hazard as you do! Epictetus was perfectly in the right, when he likened you to a jilt of fashion, prowling about in masquerade, and tipping the wink to every blackguard who parades the street.

BOOK THE NINTH

CHAPTER I

SCIPIO'S SCHEME OF MARRIAGE FOR GIL BLAS. THE MATCH, A RICH GOLDSMITH'S DAUGHTER. CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH THIS SPECULATION

One evening, on the departure of my supper company, finding myself alone with Scipio, I asked him what he had been doing that day. Striking a master-stroke, answered he. I intend that you should marry. A goldsmith of my acquaintance has an only daughter, and I mean to make up a match between you.

A goldsmith's daughter! exclaimed I with a disdainful air: are you out of your senses? Can you think of tying me up to a trinket-maker? People of a certain character in society, and on a certain footing at court, ought to have much higher views of things. Pardon me, sir! rejoined

Scipio, do not take the subject up in that light. Recollect that nobility accrues by the male side, and do not ride a higher horse than a thousand jockeys of quality whom I could name. Do you know that the heiress in question will bring a hundred thousand ducats in her pocket? Is not that a pretty little sprig of jewellery? To the resounding echo of so large a sum, my ears were instantly symphonious. The day is your own, said I to the secretary; the fortune determines the case in the lady's favour. When do you mean to put me in possession? Fair and softly, sir, answered he, the more haste the worse speed. It will be necessary for me first to communicate the affair to the father, and instil the advantage of it into his capacity. Good! rejoined I with a burst of laughter; is it thereabouts you are? The match is far advanced in its progress towards consummation. Much nearer than you suppose, replied he. But one hour's conversation with the goldsmith, and I pledge myself for his consent. But, before we go any further, let us come to an agreement, if you please. Supposing that I should transfer a hundred thousand ducats to you, what would my commission be? Twenty thousand! was my answer. Heaven be praised therefore! said he. I guessed your gratitude at ten thousand; so that it doubles mine in a similar case. Come on then! I will set this negotiation on foot to-morrow morning; and you may count upon its success, or I am little better than one of the foolish ones.

In fact, he said to me two days afterwards, I have spoken to Signor Gabriel Salero, my friend the goldsmith. On the loud report of your high desert and credit, he has lent a favourable ear to my offer of you for a son-in-law. You are to have his daughter with a hundred thousand ducats, provided you can make it appear clearly that you are in possession of the minister's good graces. Since that is the case, said I confidently to Scipio, I shall soon be married. But, not entirely to forget the girl, have you seen her? is she pretty? Not quite so pretty as her fortune, answered he. Between ourselves, this heiress's looks are as hard as her cash. Luckily, you are perfectly indifferent about that. Stone blind, by the light of the sun, my good fellow! replied I. As for us whimsical fellows about court, we marry merely for the sake of marrying. When we want beauty,

ve look for it in our friends' wives; and if, by fates and des-inies, the sweets are wasted on our own, their flavour is so nawkish to our palate, that there is some merit in their not arrying the commodity to a foreign market.

This is not all, resumed Scipio: Signor Gabriel hopes for he pleasure of your company to supper this evening. By greement, there is to be no mention of marriage. He has nvited several of his mercantile friends to this entertain-ment, where you will take your chance with the rest, and o-morrow he means to sup with you on the same terms. By this you will perceive his drift of looking before he leaps. You will do well to be a little on your guard before him. Oh! or the matter of that, interrupted I with an air of confidence, et him scrutinize me as closely as he pleases, the result annot fail to be in my favour.

All this happened as it was foretold. I was introduced t the goldsmith's, who received me with the familiarity of n old acquaintance. A vulgar dog, but warm; and as roublesome with his civility as a prude with her virtue. He presented me to Signora Eugenia his wife, and the outhful Gabriela his daughter. I opened wide my budget f compliments, without infringing the treaty, and prattled oft nothings to them, in all the vacuity of courtly dialogue.

Gabriela, with submission to my secretary's better taste, as not altogether so repulsive; whether by dint of being utrageously bedizened, or because I looked at her in the araee-shew box of her fortune. A charming house this of ignor Gabriel! There is less silver, I verily believe, in the eruvian mines, than under his roof. That metal presented tself to the view in all directions, under a thousand different orms. Every room, and especially that where we were ntertained, was a fairy palace. What a bird's eye view for son-in-law! The old codger, to do the thing genteelly, had ollected five or six merchants about him, all plodding pirit-wearing personages. Their tongues could only talk of hat their hearts were set upon; it was high change all upper-time; but unfortunately wit was at a discount.

Next night, it was my turn to treat the goldsmith. Not eing able to dazzle him with my sideboard, I had recourse o another artifice. I invited to supper such of my friends s made the finest figure at court; hangers-on of state, oted for the unwieldiness of their ambition. These fellows

could not talk on common topics: the brilliant and lucrative posts at which they aimed were all canvassed in detail; this too made its way. Poor counting-house Gabriel, in amazement at the loftiness of their ideas, shrunk into insignificance, in spite of all his hoards, on a comparison with these wonderful men. As for me, in all the plausibility of moderation, I professed to wish for nothing more than a comfortable fortune; a snug box and a competence: whereupon these gluttons of the loaves and fishes cried out with one voice that I was wrong, absolutely criminal; for the prime minister would do anything upon earth for me, and it was an act of duty to anoint my fingers with bird-lime. My honoured papa lost not a word of all this; and seemed, at going away, to take his leave with some complacency.

Scipio went of course the next morning, to ask him how he liked me. Extremely well indeed, answered the knight of the ledger; the lad has won my very heart. But, good master Scipio, I conjure you by our long acquaintance to deal with me as a true friend. We have all our weak side, as you well know. Tell me where Signor de Santillane is fallible. Is he fond of play? does he wench? On what lay are his snug little vices? Do not fight shy, I beseech you. It is very unkind, Signor Gabriel, to put such a question, retorted the go-between. Your interest is more to me than my master's. If he had any slippery propensities, likely to make your daughter unhappy, would I ever have proposed him as a son-in-law? The deuce a bit! I am too much at your service. But, between ourselves, he has but one fault; that of being faultless. He is too wise for a young man. So much the better, replied the goldsmith; he is the more like me. You may go, my friend, and tell him he shall have my daughter, and should have her though he knew no more of the minister than I do.

As soon as my secretary had reported this conversation, I flew to thank Salero for his partiality. He had already told his mind to his wife and daughter, who gave me to understand by their reception, that they yielded without disgust. I carried my father-in-law to the Duke of Lerma, whom I had informed the evening before, and presented him with due ceremony. His excellency gave him a most gracious reception, and congratulated him on having chosen a man for his son-in-law, for whom he himself had so great a regard,

nd meant to do such great things. Then did he expatiate n my good qualities, and, in fact, said so much to my ronour, that honest Gabriel thought he had met with the sest match in Spain. His joy oozed out at his eyes. On tarting, he pressed me in his arms, and said: My son, I am o impatient to see you Gabriela's husband, that the affair nall be finally settled within a week at latest.

CHAPTER II

IN THE PROGRESS OF POLITICAL VACANCIES, GIL BLAS RECOLLECTS THAT THERE IS SUCH A MAN IN THE WORLD AS DON ALPHONSO DE LEYVA; AND RENDERS HIM A SERVICE FROM MOTIVES OF VANITY

LET us leave my marriage to take care of itself for a season. he order of events requires me to recount a service rendered o my old master Don Alphonso. I had entirely forgotten iat gentleman's existence; but a circumstance recalled it to ay recollection.

The government of Valencia became vacant at this time; nd put me in mind of Don Alphonso de Leyva. I con- dered within myself that the employment would suit him o a nicety; and determined to apply for it on his behalf, not o much out of friendship as ostentation. If I could but rocure it for him, it would do me infinite honour. I told ie Duke of Lerma that I had been steward to Don Cæsar e Leyva and his son; and that having every reason in the orld to feel myself obliged to them, I should take it as a avour if he would give the government of Valencia to one or ther of them. The minister answered: Most willingly, Gil las. I love to see you grateful and generous. Besides, ie family stands very high in my esteem. The Leyvas are yal subjects; so that the place cannot be better bestowed. ou may take it as a wedding present, and do what you like ith it.

Delighted at the success of my application, I went to alderona in a prodigious hurry, to get the patent made out r Don Alphonso. There was a great crowd, waiting in spectful silence till Don Rodrigo should come and give idience. I made my way through, and the closet door

opened as if by sympathy. There were no one knows how many military and civil officers, with other people of consequence, among whom Calderona was dividing his attentions. His different reception of different people was curious. A slight inclination of the head was enough for some; others he honoured with a profusion of courtly grimace, and bowed them out of the closet. The proportions of civility were weighed to a scruple. On the other hand, there were some suitors who, shocked at his cold indifference, cursed in their secret soul the necessity for their cringing before such a monkey of an idol. Others, on the contrary, were laughing in their sleeve at his gross and self-sufficient air. But the scene was thrown away upon me; nor was I likely to profit by such a lesson. It was exactly the counterpart of my own behaviour: and I never thought of ascertaining whether my deportment was popular or offensive, so long as there was no violation of outward respect.

Don Rodrigo accidentally casting a look towards me, left a gentleman, to whom he was speaking, without ceremony, and came to pay his respects with the most unaccountable tokens of high consideration. Ah, my dear colleague! exclaimed he, what occasion procures me the pleasure of seeing you here! Is there anything we can do for you? I told him my business; whereupon he assured me, in the most obliging terms, that the affair should be expedited within four-and-twenty hours. Not satisfied with these overwhelming condescensions, he conducted me to the door of his ante-chamber, whither he never attended any but the nobility of first rank. His farewell was as flattering as his reception.

What is the meaning of all this palaver? said I while retreating; has any raven croaked my entrance, and prophesied promotion to Calderona by my overthrow? Does he really languish for my friendship? or does he feel the ground giving way under his feet, and wish to save himself by clinging to the branches of my favour and protection? It seemed a moot point, which of these conjectures might be the right. The following day, on my return, his behaviour was of the same stamp; caresses and civilities poured in upon me in torrents. It is true that other people who attempted to speak to him, were rumped in exact proportion with the blandishments of his face towards me. He snarled at some,

petrified others, and made the whole circle run the gauntlet of his displeasure. But they were all amply avenged by an occurrence, the relation of which may give a gentle hint to all the clerks and secretaries on the list of my readers.

A man very plainly dressed, and certainly not looking at all like what he was, came up to Calderona and spoke to him about a memorial, stated to have been presented by himself to the Duke of Lerma. Don Rodrigo, without looking from his clothes up to his face, said in a sharp, ungracious tone—Who may you happen to be, honest man? They called me Francillo in my childhood, answered the stranger unabashed; my next style and title was that of Don Francillo de Zuniga; and my present name is the Count de Pedrosa. Calderona was all in a twitter at this discovery, and attempted to stammer out an excuse, when he found that he had to do with a man of the first quality. Sir, said he to the Count, I have to beg you ten thousand pardons; but not knowing whom I had the honour to . . . . I want none of your apologies, interrupted Francillo with proud indignation; they are as nauseous as your rudeness was unbecoming. Recollect henceforth, that a minister's secretary ought to receive all descriptions of people with good manners. You may be vain enough to affect the representative of your master, but the public know you for his menial servant.

The haughty Don Rodrigo blushed blue at this rebuke. Yet it did not mend his manners one whit. On me it made a salutary impression. I determined to take care and ascertain the rank of my petitioners, before I gave a loose to the insolence of office, and to inflict torture only upon mutes. As Don Alphonso's patent was made out, I sent it by a purpose messenger, with a letter from the Duke of Lerma, announcing the royal favour. But I took no notice of my own share in the appointment, nor even accompanied it with a line, in the fond hope of announcing it by word of mouth, and surprising him agreeably, when he came to the court on occasion of taking the customary oaths.

CHAPTER III

PREPARATIONS FOR THE MARRIAGE OF GIL BLAS. A SPOKE IN THE WHEEL OF HYMEN

AND now once more for my lovely Gabriela! We were to be married in a week. Preparations were making on both sides for the ceremony. Salero ordered a rich wardrobe for the bride, and I hired a waiting-woman for her, a footman, and a gentleman usher of decent aspect and advanced years. The whole establishment was provided by Scipio, who longed more longingly than myself for the hour when we were to be fingering the fortune.

On the evening before the happy day, I was supping with my father-in-law, the rest of the company being made up of uncles, aunts, and cousins of either sex and every degree. The part of a supple-visaged son-in-law sat upon me to perfection. Nothing could exceed my profound respect for the goldsmith and his wife, or the transports of my passion at Gabriela's feet, while I smoothed my way into the graces of the family, by listening with impregnable patience to their witless repartees and irrational ratiocinations. Thus did I gain the great end of all my forbearance, the pleasure of pleasing my new relations. Every individual of the clan felt himself a foot taller for the honour of my alliance.

The repast ended, the company moved into a large room, where we were entertained with a concert of vocal and instrumental music, not the worst that was ever heard, though the performers were not selected from the choicest bands at Madrid. Some lively airs put us in mind of dancing. Heaven knows what sort of performers we must have been, when they took me for the coryphæus of the opera, though I never had but two or three lessons from a petty dancing-master, who taught the pages on the establishment of the Marchioness de Chaves. After we had tired our tendons, it was time to think of going home. There was no end of my bows and God-bless-you's. Farewell, my dear son-in-law, said Salero as he squeezed my hand, I shall be at your house in the morning with the portion in ready money. You will be welcome, come when you list, my dear

ther-in-law, answered I. Afterwards, wishing the family ood night, I jumped into my carriage, and ordered it to rive home.

Scarcely had I got two hundred yards from Signor abriel's house, when fifteen or twenty men, some on foot nd some on horseback, all with swords and fire-arms, surounded and stopped the coach, crying out, *In the name of ur sovereign lord the king.* They dragged me out by main orce, and thrust me into a hack-chaise, when the leader of ne party got in with me, and ordered the driver to go for egovia. There could be no doubt but the honest gentlean by my side was an alguazil. I wanted to know somening about the cause of my arrest; but he answered in the nguage of those gentry, which is very bad language, that he ad other things to do than to satisfy my impertinent uriosity. I suggested that he might have mistaken his an. No, no, retorted he, the fool is wiser than that. ou are Signor de Santillane; and in that case you are to go ong with me. Not being able to deny that fact, it beame an act of prudence to hold my tongue. For the reainder of the night we traversed Mancanarez in sulky lence, changed horses at Colmenar, and arrived the next vening at Segovia, where the lodging provided for me was 1 the tower.

CHAPTER IV

THE TREATMENT OF GIL BLAS IN THE TOWER OF SEGOVIA. THE CAUSE OF HIS IMPRISONMENT

THEIR first favour was to clap me up in a cell, where they ft me on the straw like a criminal, whose only earthly ortion was to con over his dying speech in solitude. I assed the night, not in bewailing my fate, for it had not t presented itself in all its aggravation, but in endeavourg to divine its cause. Doubtless it must have been lderona's handywork. And yet though his branching nours might have pressed thick upon his senses, I could t conceive how the Duke of Lerma could have been inced to treat me so inhumanly. Sometimes I appreended my arrest to have been without his excellency's owledge; at other times I thought him the contriver of it,

for some political reasons, such as weigh with ministers when they sacrifice their accomplices at the shrine of state policy.

My mind was vibrating to and fro with these various conjectures, when the dawn peeping in at my little grated window, presented to my sight all the horror of the place where I was confined. Then did I vent my sorrows without ceasing, and my eyes became two springs of tears, flowing inexhaustibly at the remembrance of my prosperous state. Pending this paroxysm of grief, a turnkey brought me my day's allowance of bread and water. He looked at me, and on the contemplation of my tear-besprinkled visage, gaoler as he was, there came over him a sentiment of pity: Do not despair, said he. This life is full of crosses, but mind them not. You are young; after these days, you will live to see better. In the mean time, eat at the king's mess, with what appetite you may.

My comforter withdrew with this quaint invitation, answered by my groans and tears. The rest of the day was spent in cursing my wayward destiny, without thinking of my empty stomach. As for the royal morsel, it seemed more like the message of wrath than the boon of benevolence; the tantalizing protraction of pain, rather than the solace of affliction.

Night came, and with it the rattle of a key in my keyhole. My dungeon door opened, and in came a man with a wax-light in his hand. He advanced towards me, saying—Signor Gil Blas, behold in me one of your old friends. I am Don Andrew de Tordesillas, in the Archbishop of Grenada's service while you enjoyed that prelate's favour. You may recollect engaging his interest in my behalf, and thereby procuring me a post in Mexico; but instead of embarking for the Indies, I stopped in the town of Alicant. There I married the governor's daughter, and by a series of adventures of which you shall hereafter have the particulars, I am now warden of this tower. It is expressly forbidden me to let you speak to any living soul, to give you any better bed than straw, or any other sustenance than bread and water. But besides that your misfortunes interest my humanity, you have done me service, and gratitude countervails the harshness of my orders. They think to make me the instrument of their cruelty, but it is my

better purpose to soften the rigour of your captivity. Get up and follow me.

Though my humane keeper was entitled to some acknowledgment, my spirits were so affected as to interdict my speech. All I could do was to attend him. We crossed a court, and mounted a narrow staircase to a little room at the top of the tower. It was no small surprise, on entering, to find a table with lights on it, neatly set out with covers for two. They will serve up immediately, said Tordesillas. We are going to sup together. This snug retreat is appointed for your lodging; it will agree better with you than your cell. From your window you will look down on the flowery banks of the Erêma, and the delicious vale of Coca, bounded by the mountains which divide the two Castiles. At first you will care little for prospects; but when time shall have softened your keener sensations into a composed melancholy, it will be a pleasure to feast your eyes on such engaging scenes. Then, as for linen and other necessaries befitting a man accustomed to the comforts of life, they shall be always at your service. Your bed and board shall be such as you could wish, with a plentiful supply of books. In a word, you shall have everything but your liberty.

My spirits were a little tranquillized by these obliging offers. I took courage and returned my best thanks, assuring him that his generous conduct restored me to life, and that I hoped at some time or other to find an opportunity of testifying my gratitude. To be sure! and why should you not? answered he. Did you fancy yourself a prisoner for life? Nothing less likely! and I would lay a wager that you will be released in a very few months. What say you, Signor Don Andrew? exclaimed I. Then surely you are acquainted with the occasion of my misfortune. You guess right, replied he. The alguazil who brought you hither told me the whole story in confidence. The king, hearing that the Count de Lemos and you were in the habit of escorting the Prince of Spain by night to a house of suspicious character, as a punishment for your loose morals, has banished the count, and sent you hither, to be treated in the style of which you have had a specimen. And how, cried I, did that circumstance come to the king's knowledge? That is what I am most curious to ascertain. And that,

answered he, is precisely what the alguazil did not tell, apparently because he did not know.

At this epoch of our conversation, the servants brought in supper. When everything was set in order, Tordesillas sent away the attendants, not wishing our conversation to be overheard. He shut the door, and we took our seats opposite to each other. Let us say grace, and fall to, said he. Your appetite ought to be good after two days of fasting. Under this impression he loaded my plate as if he had been cramming the craw of a starveling. In fact, nothing was more likely than that I should play the devil among the ragouts; but what is likely does not always happen. Though my intestines were yearning for support, their staple stuck in my throat, for my heart loathed all pleasurable indulgence in the present state of my affairs. In vain did my warden, to drive away the blue devils, pledge me continually, and expatiate on the excellence of his wine; imperishable nectar would have been pricked according to the fastidious report of my palate. This being the case, he went another way to work, and told me the story of his marriage, with as much humour as such a subject would admit. Here he was still less successful. So wandering was my attention, that before the end I had forgotten the beginning and the middle. At length he was convinced that there was no diverting my gloomy thoughts for that evening. After finishing his solitary supper, he rose from table, saying: Signor de Santillane, I shall leave you to your repose, or rather to the free indulgence of your own reveries. But, take my word for it, your misfortune will not be of long continuance. The king is naturally good. When his anger shall have passed away, and your deplorable estate shall occur to his milder thoughts, your punishment will appear sufficient in his eyes. With these words, my kind-hearted gaoler went down-stairs, and sent the servants to take away. Not even the brass candlesticks were left behind; and I went to bed by the palpable darkness of a glimmering lamp suspended against the wall.

CHAPTER V

HIS REFLECTIONS BEFORE HE WENT TO SLEEP THAT NIGHT, AND THE NOISE THAT WAKED HIM

Two hours at least were my thoughts employed on what Cordesillas had told me. Here, then, am I, for having lent myself to the pleasures of the heir-apparent! It was certainly not having my wits about me, to pander for so young a prince. Therein consists my crime; had he been arrived at a more knowing age, the king perhaps might only have laughed at what has now made him so angry. But who can have given such counsel to the monarch, without dreading the prince's resentment or the Duke of Lerma's? That minister will doubtless take ample vengeance for his nephew the Count de Lemos. How can the king have made the discovery? That is above my comprehension.

This last was the eternal burden of my song. But the idea most afflictive to my mind, what drove me to despair, and laid fiend-like hold upon my fancy, was the unquestioned plunder of my effects. My strong box, exclaimed I, my dear wealth, what is become of you? Into what hands have you fallen? Alas! you are lost in less time than you were gained! The ruinous confusion of my household was the perpetual death's-head of my imagination. Yet this wilderness of melancholy ideas sheltered me from absolute distraction: sleep, which had shunned my wretched straw, now paid his readier visit to my soft and gentlemanly couch. Watching and wine, too, imparted a strong narcotic to his poppies. My slumbers were profound; and to all appearance, the day might have peeped in upon my repose, if I had not been awakened all at once by such sounds as rarely perforate a prison wall. I heard the thrum of a guitar, accompanying a man's voice. My whole attention was absorbed; but the invisible musician paused, and left the fleeting impression of a dream. An instant afterwards, my ear was soothed with the sound of the same instrument, and the same voice.

Wisely the ant against poor winter hoards
The stock which summer's wealth affords;
In grasshoppers, that must at autumn die,
How vain were such an industry!

Of love or fortune the deceitful light
Might half excuse our cheated sight,
If it of life the whole small time would stay,
And be our sunshine all the day.*

These verses, which sounded as if they had been sung expressly for the dirge of my departed happiness, were only an aggravation of my feelings. The truth of the sentiment, said I, is but too well exemplified in me. The meteor of court favour has but plunged me in substantial darkness; the summer sunshine of ambition is quenched in these autumnal glooms. Now did I sink again into cold and comfortless meditation; my miseries began to flow afresh, as if they fed and grew upon their own vital stream. Yet my wailings ended with the night; and the first rays which played upon my chamber wall amused my mind into composure. I got up to open my window, and let the vivid air of morning into my room. Then I glanced over the country, so attractively depicted in the description of my keeper. It did not seem to justify his panegyric. The Erema, a second Tagus in my magnifying fancy, was little better than a brook. Its flowery banks were fringed with nettles, and arrayed in all the majesty of thistles; the delicious vale in this fairy prospect was a barren wilderness, untamed by human labour. It therefore was very evident that my keener sensations were not yet softened into such a composed melancholy, as could give any but a jaundiced colouring to the landscape.

I began dressing, and had already half finished my toilet, when Tordesillas ushered in an old chambermaid, laden with shirts and towels. Signor Gil Blas, said he, here is your linen. Do not be saving of it; there shall always be as many changes as you can possibly want. Well now! and

* To have substituted, with a slight variation, these two stanzas from Cowley for a translation of the common-place couplet in the original, will probably not be thought to require any apology. They necessarily involve a change in the consequent reflections of our hero.
TRANSLATOR.

how have you passed the night? Has the drowsy god administered his anodyne? I could have slept till this time, answered I, if I had not been awakened by a voice singing to a guitar. The cavalier who has disturbed your repose, resumed he, is a state prisoner; and his chamber is contiguous to yours. He is a knight of the military order of Calatrava, and is a very accomplished person. His name is Don Gaston de Cogollos. You may meet as often as you like, and take your meals together. It will afford reciprocal consolation to compare your fortunes. There can be no doubt of your being agreeable to one another. I assured Don Andrew how sensible I was of his indulgence in allowing me to blend my sorrows with those of my fellow-sufferer; and, as I betrayed some impatience to be acquainted with him, our accommodating warden met my wishes on the very same day. He fixed me to dine with Don Gaston, whose prepossessing physiognomy and symmetry of feature struck me sensibly. Judge what it must have been, to make so strong an impression on eyes accustomed to encounter the dazzling exterior of the court. Figure to yourself a man fashioned in the mould of pleasure; one of those heroes in romance, who has only to shew his face, and banish the sweet sleep from the eyelids of princesses. Add to this, that nature, who is generally bountiful with one hand and niggardly with the other, had crowned the perfections of Cogollos with wit and valour. He was a man, whose like, take him for all in all, we might not soon look upon again.

If this fine fellow was mightily to my taste, it was my good luck not to be altogether offensive to him. He no longer sang at night for fear of annoying me, though I begged him by no means to restrain his inclinations on my account. A bond of union is soon formed between brethren in misfortune. A close friendship succeeded to mere acquaintance, and strengthened from day to day. The liberty of uninterrupted intercourse contributed greatly to our mutual support; our burden became lighter by division.

One day after dinner I went into his room, just as he was tuning his guitar. To hear him more at my ease, I sat down on the only stool; while he, reclining on his bed, played a pathetic air, and sang to it a ditty, expressing the despair of a lover and the cruelty of his mistress. When

he had finished, I said to him with a smile, Sir knight, such strains as these could never be applicable to your own successes with the fair. You were not made to cope with female repulse. You think too well of me, answered he. The verses you have just heard were composed to fit my own case; to soften a heart of adamant. You must hear my story, and in my story, my distresses.

CHAPTER VI

HISTORY OF DON GASTON DE COGOLLOS AND DONNA HELENA DE GALISTEO

It will be very soon four years since I left Madrid to go and see my aunt Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla at Coria: she is one of the richest dowagers in Old Castile, with myself for her only heir. Scarcely had I got within her doors, when love invaded my repose. The windows of my room faced the lattice of a lady living opposite: but the street was narrow, and her blinds pervious to the eye. It was an opportunity too delicious to be lost; and I found my neighbour so lovely that my heart was captivated. The subject of my sentry-watch could not be mistaken. She marked it well; but she was not a girl to glory in the detection, still less to encourage my fooleries.

It was natural to inquire the name of this mighty conqueror. I learnt it to be Donna Helena, only daughter of Don George de Galisteo, lord of a large domain near Coria. She had innumerable offers of marriage; but her father repulsed them all, because he meant to bestow her hand on his nephew, Don Austin de Olighera, who had uninterrupted access to his cousin while the settlements were preparing. This was no bar to my hopes: on the contrary, it whetted my eagerness: and the insolent pleasure of supplanting a favoured rival was, perhaps, at bottom equally my motive with a more noble passion. My visual artillery was obstinately planted against my unyielding fair. Her attendant Felicia was not without the incense of a glance, to soften her rigid constancy in my favour; while nods and becks stood for the current coin of language. But all these efforts of gallantry were in vain—the maid was im-

pregnable like her mistress—never was there such a pair of cold and cruel ones.

The commerce of the eyes being so unthrifty, I had recourse to different agents. My scouts were on the watch to hunt out what acquaintance Felicia might have in town. They discovered an old lady, by name Theodora, to be her most intimate friend, and that they often met. Delighted at the intelligence, I went point blank to Theodora, and engaged her by presents in my interest. She took my cause up heartily, promised to contrive an interview for me with her friend, and kept her engagement the very next day.

I am no longer the wretch of yesterday, said I to Felicia, since my sufferings have melted you to pity. How deep is my debt to your friend for her kind interference in my behalf. Sir, answered she, Theodora can do what she pleases with me. She has brought me over to your side of the question; and if I can do you a kindness, you shall soon be at the summit of your wishes; but, with all my partiality in your favour, I know not how far my efforts may be successful. It would be cruel to mislead you: the prize will not be gained without a severe conflict. The object of your passion is betrothed to another gentleman, and her character most inauspicious to your designs. Such is her pride, and so closely locked are her secrets within her own breast, that if, by constancy and assiduities, you could extort from her a few sighs, fancy not that her haughty spirit would indulge your ears with their music. Ah! my dear Felicia, exclaimed I in an agony, why will you thus magnify the obstacles in my way? To set them in array will kill me. Lead me on with false hopes, if you will; but do not drive me to despair. With these words I took one of her hands, pressed it between mine, and slid a diamond on her finger value three hundred pistoles, with such a moving compliment as made her weep again.

Such speeches and corresponding actions deserved some scanty comfort. She smoothed a little the rugged path of love. Sir, said she, what I have just been telling you need not quite quench your hope. Your rival, it is true, is in possession of the ground. He comes back and fore as he pleases. He toys with her as often as he likes, but all that is in your favour. The habit of constant intercourse sheds a languor over their meetings. They part without pain,

and come together without emotion. One would take them for man and wife. In a word, my mistress has no marks of violent love for Don Austin. Besides, in point of person, there is such a difference between you and him as cannot fail to catch the eye of a nice observer like Donna Helena. Therefore do not be cast down. Continue your particular attentions. You shall have a second in me. I shall let no opportunity escape of pointing out to my mistress the merit of all your exertions to please her. In vain shall she intrench herself behind reserve. In spite of guard and garrison, I will ransack the muster-roll of her sentiments.

Now were my open attacks and secret ambuscades more fiercely pointed against the daughter of Don George. Among the rest, I entertained her with a serenade. After the concert Felicia, to sound her mistress, begged to know how she had been entertained. The singer had a good voice, said Donna Helena. But how did you like the words? replied the abigail. I scarcely noted them, returned the lady; the music engrossed my whole attention. The poetry excited as little curiosity as its author. If that is the case, exclaimed the chambermaid, poor Don Gaston de Colgollos is reckoning without his host; and a miserable spendthrift of his glances, to be always ogling at our lattice-work. Perhaps it may not be he, said the mistress with petrifying indifference, but some other spark, announcing his passion by this concert. Excuse me, answered Felicia, it is Don Gaston himself, who accosted me this morning in the street, and implored me to assure you how he adored, in defiance of your rigorous repulses: but that he should esteem himself the most blest of mortals, if you would allow him to soothe his desponding thoughts by all the most delicate and impassioned attentions. Judge now if I can be mistaken, after so open an avowal.

Don George's daughter changed countenance at once, and said to her servant with a severe frown, You might well have dispensed with the relation of this impertinent discourse. Bring me no more such idle tales; and tell this young madman, when next he accosts you, to play off his shallow artifices on some more accommodating fool; but, at all events, let him choose a more gentlemanly recreation than that of lounging all day at his window, and prying into the privacy of my apartment.

This message was faithfully delivered at my next interview with Felicia, who assured me that her mistress's modes of speech were not to be taken in their literal construction, but that my affairs were in the best possible train. For my part, being little read in the science of coquetry, and finding no favourable sense on the face of the author's original words, I was half out of humour with the wire-drawn comments of the critic. She laughed at my misgiving, and asked her friend for pen, ink, and paper, saying: Sir knight of the doleful countenance, write immediately to Donna Helena as dolefully as you look. Make echo ring with your sufferings; outsigh the river's murmur; and, above all, let rocks and woods resound with the prohibition of appearing at your window. Then pawn your existence on obeying her, though without the possibility ever to redeem the pledge. Turn all that nonsense into pretty sentences, as you gay deceivers so well know how to do, and leave the rest to me. The event, I flatter myself, will redound more than you are aware to the honour of my penetration.

He must have been a strange lover who would not have profited by so opportune an occasion of writing to his mistress. My letter was couched in the most pathetic terms. Felicia smiled at its contents; and said, that if the women knew the art of infatuating men, the men in return had borrowed their influence over women from the arch wheedler himself. My privy counsellor took the note, and went back to Don George's, with a special injunction that my windows should be fast shut for some days.

Madam, said she, going up to Donna Helena, I met Don Gaston. He must needs endeavour to come round me with his flattering speeches. In tremulous accents, like a culprit pleading against his sentence, he begged to know whether I had spoken to you on his behalf. Then, in prompt and faithful compliance with your orders, I snapped up the words out of his mouth. To be sure, my tongue did run at a fine rate against him. I called him all manner of names, and left him in the street like a stock, staring at my vermagant loquacity. I am delighted, answered Donna Helena, that you have disengaged me from that troublesome person. But there was no occasion to have snubbed him so unmercifully. A creature of your degree should always

keep a good tongue in its mouth. Madam, replied the domestic, one cannot get rid of a determined lover by mincing one's words, though it comes to much the same thing when one flies into a passion. Don Gaston, for instance, was not to be bullied out of his senses. After having given it him on both sides of his ears, as I told you, I went on that errand of yours to the house of your relation. The lady, as ill-luck would have it, kept me longer than she ought. I say longer than she ought, because my plague and torment met me on my return. Who the deuce would have thought of seeing him? It put me all in a twitter; but then my tongue, which at other times is apt to be in a twitter, stuck motionless in my mouth. While my tongue stuck motionless in my mouth, what did he do? He slid a paper into my hand without giving me time to consider whether I should take it or no, and made off in a moment.

After this introduction, she drew my letter from under her stays, and gave it with half a banter to her mistress, who affected to read it in humorous scorn, but digested the contents most greedily, and then put on the starch, offended prude. In good earnest, Felicia, said she with all the gravity she could assume, you were extremely off your guard, quite bewildered and fascinated, to have taken the charge of such an epistle. What construction would Don Gaston put upon it? What must I think of it myself? You give me reason, by this strange behaviour, to mistrust your fidelity, while he must suspect me of encouraging his odious suit. Alas! he may, perhaps, lay that flattering unction to his soul, that my love is legible in these characters, and not his trespass. Only consider how you lay my towering pride. Oh! quite the reverse, madam, answered the petticoated pleader; it is impossible for him to think that; and if he did, he would soon be convinced with a flea in his ear. I shall tell him, when next we meet, that I have delivered his letter, that you glanced at the superscription with petrifying indifference, and then, without reading a word, tore it into ten thousand pieces. You may swear that I did not read it with a safe conscience, replied Donna Helena. I should be puzzled to retrace a single sentiment. Don George's daughter, not contented with these words, suited the action to them, tore my letter, and imposed silence on my advocate.

As I had promised no longer to play the lover at my win-

ow, the farce of obedience was kept up for several days. gling being interdicted, my courtship was doomed to enter at my Helena's obdurate ears. One night I attended nder her balcony with musicians; the first bars of the renade were already playing, when a swaggering blade, word in hand, rushed in upon our harmony, laying about im to the right and left, to the utter discomfiture of the oop. Such mad warfare fired my tilting propensities to qual fury. The affray became serious. Donna Helena nd her maid were disturbed by the clash of swords. They oked out at their lattice, and saw two men engaged. heir cries roused Don George and his servants. The hole neighbourhood was assembled to part the combatants. ut they came too late: on the field of battle, bathed in his wn blood and almost lifeless, lay my unfortunate body. hey carried me to my aunt's, and sent for the best surgical ssistance in the place.

All the world was merciful, and wished me well, especially onna Helena, whose heart was now unmasked. Her rced severity yielded to her natural feelings. Would you elieve it? The cold, relentless, insensible, was kindled to the warmest of love's votaries. She wore out the mainder of the night in weeping with her faithful confinante, and giving her cousin, Don Austin de Olighera, to erdition: for him they taxed with the plotted massacre, nd the bill was a true one. He could hide his heart as well s his cousin; he therefore watched my motions, without eming to suspect them; and fancying them not to be ithout a corresponding impulse, he resolved not to be crificed with impunity. The accident was an awkward ne to me, but it ended in overpowering rapture. Dangerous my wound was, the surgeons soon brought me about. I as still confined to my chamber, when my aunt, Donna leonora, went over to Don George, and made proposals for onna Helena. He consented the more readily to the arriage, as he never expected to see Don Austin again. ne good old man was afraid of his daughter's not liking me, cause cousin Olighera had kept her company; but she was tractable to the parental behest, as to furnish grounds r believing that in Spain, as in other countries, the species, t the individual, is the object with the sex.

Felicia at our first private meeting, communicated the

emotions of her mistress on my misfortune. Now, like another Paris, I thought Troy well lost for my Helen, and blessed the happy consequences of my wound. Don George allowed me to speak with his daughter in presence of her attendant. What a heavenly interview! I begged and prayed the lady so earnestly to tell me whether her sufferance of my vows was forced upon her by her father, that she at length confessed her obedience to be in unison with her inclinations. After so delicious a declaration, my whole soul was given up to love and pleasurable gratifications. Our nuptials were to be graced by a magnificent procession of all the principal people in Coria and the neighbourhood.

I gave a splendid party at my aunt's country-house, in the suburbs on the side of Manroi. Don George, his daughter, the family, and friends on both sides were present. There was a concert of vocal and instrumental music, with a company of strolling players, to represent a comedy. In the middle of the festivities, some one whispered me that a man wanted to speak with me in the hall. I got up from table to go and see who it was. The stranger looked like a gentleman's servant. He put a letter into my hand, containing these words: "If you have any sense of honour, as a knight of your order ought to have, you will not fail to attend to-morrow morning in the plain of Manroi. There you will find an antagonist, ready to give you your revenge for his former attack upon your person, or, what he rather hopes and meditates, to spoil your connubial transports with Donna Helena.

"Don Austin de Olighera."

If love is a Spanish passion, revenge is the Spanish lunacy. Such a note as this was not to be read with composure. At the mere subscription of Don Austin, there kindled in my veins a fire, which almost made me forget the claims of hospitality. I was tempted to steal away from my company, and seek my antagonist on the instant. For fear of disturbing the merriment, however, I bridled in my rage, and said to the messenger: My friend, you may tell your employer that I shall meet him on the appointed spot at sun-rise, and resume the contest with obstinacy equal to his own.

After sending this answer, I resumed my seat at table

with so composed a mien, that no creature had the least suspicion of what had occurred. During the rest of the day I gave myself up to the pleasures of the festival, which ended not till midnight. The guests then returned to town, but I staid behind, under pretext of taking the air on the following morning. Instead of going to bed, I watched for the dawn with maddening impatience. With the first ray I got on horseback, and rode alone towards Manroi. On the plain was a horseman, riding up to me at full speed. I rushed forward, and we met half-way. It was my rival. Knight, said he, superciliously, it is against my will that I meet you a second time on the same occasion, but you have brought your fate on yourself. After the adventure of the serenade, you ought to have waived your pretensions to Don George's daughter, or at least to have been assured that the support of them must cost you dearer than a single encounter. You are too much elated, answered I, with an advantage which is less owing, perhaps, to your superior skill, than to the darkness of the night. Remember, that victory is of the same blind family with fortune. It shall be my lot to teach you, replied he with insulting scorn, that I have unsealed the eyes of both.

At this proud defiance, we both dismounted, tied our horses to a tree, and engaged with equal fury. I must candidly acknowledge the prowess of my antagonist, who was a consummate master of fencing. My life was exposed to the greatest possible danger. Nevertheless, as the strong is often vanquished by the weak, my rival, in spite of all his science, received a thrust through the heart, and fell a lifeless corpse.

I immediately returned, and told a confidential servant what had happened, requesting him to take horse and acquaint my aunt, before the officers of justice could get intelligence of the event. He was also to obtain from her a supply of money and jewels, and then join me at the first inn as you enter Plazencia.

All this was performed within three hours. Donna Eleonora rather triumphed than mourned over a catastrophe, which restored my injured honour; and sent me large remittances for my travels abroad, till the affair had blown over.

Not to dwell on indifferent circumstances, suffice it to say,

that I embarked for Italy, and equipped myself so as to make a respectable figure at the several courts.

While I was endeavouring to beguile the weary hours of absence, Helena was weeping at home from the same cause. Instead of joining in the family resentment, her heart was panting for a compromise, and for my speedy return. Six months had already elapsed, and I firmly believe that her constancy would have been proof against the track of time, had time been seconded by no more powerful ally. Don Blas de Combados, a gentleman from the western coast of Galicia, came to Coria, to take possession of a rich inheritance unsuccessfully contested by a near relation. He liked that country so much better than his own, that he made it his principal residence. Combados was a personable man. His manners were gentle and well-bred, his conversation most insinuating. With such a passport, he soon got into the best company, and knew all the family concerns of the place.

It was not long before he heard of Don George's daughter, and of her extraordinary beauty. This touched his curiosity nearly; he was eager to behold so formidable a lady. For this purpose, he endeavoured to worm himself into the good graces of her father, and succeeded so well, that the old gentleman, already looking on him as a son-in-law, gave him free admission to the house, and the liberty of conversing with Donna Helena in his presence. The Galician soon became deeply enamoured of her: indeed, it was the common fate of all who had ever beheld her charms. He opened his heart to Don George, who consented to his paying his addresses, but told him that so far from offering violence to her inclination, he should never interfere in her choice. Hereupon Don Blas pressed every device that impassioned ingenuity could suggest into his service, to melt and warm the icicles of reserve; but the lady was impenetrable to his arts, fast bound in the fetters of an earlier love. Felicia, however, was in the new suitor's interest, convinced of his merit by the universal argument. All the faculties of her soul were called forth in his cause. On the other hand, the father urged his wishes and entreaties. Thus was Donna Helena tormented for a whole year with their importunities, and yet her faith continued unshaken.

Combados finding that Don George and Felicia took up

is cause with very little success, proposed an expedient for onquering prejudice to the following effect. We will sup-ose a merchant of Coria to have received a letter from his talian correspondent, in which, among the news of the day, here shall be the following paragraph: " A Spanish gentle-nan, Don Gaston de Cogollos, has lately arrived at the ourt of Parma. He is said to be nephew and sole heir to rich widow of Coria. He is paying his addresses to a noble-nan's daughter; but the family wishes to ascertain the lalidity of his pretensions. Send me word, therefore, whether you know this Don Gaston, together with the mount of his aunt's fortune. On your answer the marriage vill depend. Parma, ...day of, &c."

The old gentleman considered this trick as a mere ebulli-ion of humour, a lawful stratagem of amorous warfare; and he jade of a go-between, with conscience still more callous han her master's, was delighted with the probability of he manœuvre. It seemed to be so much the more happily nagined, as they knew Helena to be a proud girl, capable f taking decisive measures, in the moment of surprise and ndignation. Don George undertook to be the herald of my ickleness, and by way of colouring the contrivance more aturally, to confront the pretended correspondent with ier. This project was executed as soon as formed. The ather, with counterfeit emotions of displeasure, said to Donna Helena: Daughter, it is not enough now to tell you hat our relations inveigh against an alliance with Don ustin's murderer; a still stronger reason henceforward resses, to detach you from Don Gaston. It may well verwhelm you with shame, to have been his dupe so long. Here is an undeniable proof of his inconstancy. Only read his letter just received by a merchant of Coria from Italy. The trembling Helena caught at this forged paper; glanced over the writing; then weighed every expression, and stood ghast at the import of the whole. A keen pang of dis-ppointment wrung from her a few reluctant tears; but ride came to her assistance; she wiped away the falling rops of weakness, and said to her father in a determined one: Sir, you have just been witness of my folly; now bear estimony to my triumph over myself. The delusion is ast; Don Gaston is the object of my utter contempt. I am eady to meet Don Blas at the altar, and be beforehand with

the traitor in the pledge of our transferred affections. Don George, transported with joy at this change, embraced his daughter, extolled her spirit to the skies, and hastened the necessary preparations, with all the self-complacency of a successful plotter.

Thus was Donna Helena snatched from me. She threw herself into the arms of Combados in a pet, not listening to the secret whispers of love within her breast, nor suspecting a story which ought to have seemed so improbable in the annals of true passion. The haughty are always the victims of their own rash conclusions. Resentment of insulted beauty triumphed wholly over the suggestions of tenderness. And yet, a few days after marriage, there came over her some feelings of remorse for her precipitation; it struck her that the letter might have been a forgery; and the very possibility disturbed her peace. But the enamoured Don Blas left his wife no time to nurse up thoughts injurious to their new-found joys; a succession of gaiety and pleasure kept her in a thoughtless whirl, and shielded her from the pangs of unavailing repentance.

She appeared to be in high good humour with so spirit-stirring a husband; so that they were living together in perfect unanimity, when my aunt adjusted my affair with Don Austin's relations. Of this she wrote me word to Italy. I returned on the wings of love. Donna Eleonora, not having announced the marriage, informed me of it on my arrival; and remarking what pain it gave me, said: You are in the wrong, nephew, to shew so much feeling for a faithless fair. Banish from your memory a person so unworthy to share in its tender recollections.

As my aunt did not know how Donna Helena had been played upon, she had reason to talk as she did: nor could she have given me better advice. To affect indifference, if not to conquer my passion, was my bounden duty. Yet there could be no harm in just inquiring by what means this union had been brought to bear. To get at the truth, I determined on applying to Felicia's friend Theodora. There I met with Felicia herself, who was confounded at my unwelcome presence, and would have escaped from the necessity of explanation. But I stopped her. Why do you avoid me? said I. Has your perjured mistress forbidden you to give ear to my complaints? or would you

make a merit with the ungrateful woman, of your voluntary refusal.

Sir, answered the plotting abigail, I confess my fault, and throw myself on your mercy. Your appearance here has filled me with remorse. My mistress has been betrayed, and unhappily in part by my agency. The particulars of their infernal device followed this avowal, with an endeavour to make me amends for its lamentable consequence. To this effect, she offered me her services with her mistress, and promised to undeceive her; in a word, to work night and day, that she might soften the rigour of my sufferings, and open the career of hope.

I pass over the numberless contradictions she experienced, before she could accomplish the projected interview. It was at length arranged to admit me privately, while Don Blas was at his hunting-seat. The plot did not linger. The husband went into the country, and they sent for me to his lady's apartment.

My onset was reproachful in the extreme, but my mouth was soon shut upon the subject. It is useless to look back upon the past, said the lady. It can be no part of our present intention to work upon each other's feelings; and you are grievously mistaken, if you fancy me inclined to flatter your aspiring hopes. My sole inducement for receiving you here was to tell you personally, that you have only henceforth to forget me. Perhaps I might have been better satisfied with my lot, had it been united with yours; but since heaven has ordered it otherwise, we must submit to its decrees.

What! madam, answered I, is it not enough to have lost you, to see my successful rival in quiet possession of all my soul holds dear, but I must also banish you from my thoughts? You would tear from me even my passion, my only remaining blessing! And think you that a man, whom you have once enchanted, can recover his self-possession? Know yourself better, and cease to enforce impracticable behests. Well then! if so, rejoined she with hurried importunity, do you cease to flatter yourself with interesting my gratitude or my pity. In one short word, the wife of Don Blas shall never be the mistress of Don Gaston. Let us at once end a conversation at which delicacy revolts in spite of virtue, and peremptorily forbids its longer continuance.

I now threw myself at the lady's feet in despair. All the powers of language and of tears were called forth to soften her. But even this served only to excite some inbred sentiments of compassion, stifled as soon as born, and sacrificed at the shrine of duty. After having fruitlessly exhausted all my stores of tender persuasion, rage took possession of my breast. I drew my sword, and would have fallen on its point before the inexorable Helena, but she saw my design and prevented it. Stay your rash hand, Cogollos, said she. Is it thus that you consult my reputation? In dying thus and here, you will brand me with dishonour, and my husband with the imputation of murder.

In the agony of my despair, far from yielding to these suggestions, I only struggled against the preventive efforts of the two women, and should have struggled too successfully, if Don Blas had not appeared to second them. He had been apprized of our assignation; and instead of going into the country, had concealed himself behind the hangings, to overhear our conference. Don Gaston, cried he, as he arrested my uplifted arm, recall your scattered senses, and no longer give a loose to these mad transports.

Here I could hold no longer. Is it for you, said I, to turn me from my resolution? You ought rather yourself to plunge a dagger in my bosom. My love, with all its train of miseries, is an insult to you. Have you not surprised me in your wife's apartment at this unseasonable hour? what greater provocation can you want for your revenge? Stab me, and rid yourself of a man, who can only give up the adoration of Donna Helena with his life. It is in vain, answered Don Blas, that you endeavour to interest my honour in your destruction. You are sufficiently punished for your rashness; and my wife's imprudence, in giving you this opportunity of indulging it, is sanctified by the purity of her sentiments. Take my advice, Cogollos: shrink not effeminately from your wayward destiny, but bear up against it with the patient courage of a hero.

The prudent Galician, by such language, gradually composed the ferment of my mind, and waked me once more to virtue. I withdrew in the determination of removing far from the scene of my folly, and went for Madrid, two days afterwards. There, pursuing the career of fortune and preferment, I appeared at court, and laid myself out for

connections. But it was my ill luck to attach myself particularly to the Marquis of Villareal, a Portuguese grandee, who, lying under a suspicion of intending to emancipate his country from the Spanish yoke, is now in the castle of Alicant. As the Duke of Lerma knew me to be closely connected with this nobleman, he gave orders for my arrest and detention here. That minister thought me capable of engaging in such a project—he could not have offered a more outrageous affront to a man of noble birth and a Castilian.

Don Gaston thus ended his story. By way of consolation I said to him, Illustrious sir, your honour can receive no taint from this temporary detainer, and your interest will probably be promoted by it in the end. When the Duke of Lerma shall be convinced of your innocence, he will not fail to give you a considerable post, and thus retrieve the character of a gentleman unjustly accused of treason.

CHAPTER VII

SCIPIO FINDS GIL BLAS OUT IN THE TOWER OF SEGOVIA, AND BRINGS HIM A BUDGET OF NEWS

Our conversation was interrupted by Tordesillas, who came into the room, and addressed me thus: Signor Gil Blas, I have just been speaking with a young man at the prison gate. He inquired if you were not here, and looked much mortified at my refusal to satisfy his curiosity. Noble governor, said he, with tears in his eyes, do not reject my most humble petition. I am Signor de Santillane's principal domestic, and you will do an act of charity by allowing me to see him. You pass for a kind-hearted gentleman in Segovia; I hope you will not deny me the favour of conversing for a few minutes with my dear master, who is unfortunate rather than criminal. In short, continued Don Andrew, the lad was so importunate, that I promised to comply with his wishes this evening.

I assured Tordesillas that he could not have pleased me better than by bringing this young man to me, who could probably communicate tidings of the last importance. I waited with impatience for the entrance of my faithful

Scipio; since I could not doubt him to be the man, nor was I mistaken in my conjecture. He was introduced at the time appointed; and his joy, which only mine could equal, broke forth into the most whimsical demonstrations. On my side, in the ecstasy of delight, I stretched out my arms to him, and he rushed into them with no courtly measured embrace. All distinctions of master and dependent were levelled in the sympathetic rapture of our meeting.

When our transports had subsided a little, I inquired into the state of my household. You have neither household nor house, answered he: to spare you a long string of questions, I will sum up your worldly concerns in two words. Your property has been pillaged at both ends, both by the banditti of the law and by your own retainers, who, regarding you as a ruined man, paid themselves their own wages out of whatever they found that was portable. Luckily for you, I had the dexterity to save from their harpy clutches two large bags of double pistoles. Salero, in whose custody I deposited them, will make restitution on your release, which cannot be far distant, as you were put upon his majesty's pension list of prisoners without the Duke of Lerma's knowledge or consent.

I asked Scipio how he knew his excellency to have had no share in my arrest. You may depend on it, answered he, my information is undeniable. One of my friends in the Duke of Uzeda's confidence acquainted me with all the circumstances of your imprisonment. Calderona, having discovered by a spy that Signora Sirena, with the handle of an alias to her name, was receiving night visits from the Prince of Spain, and that the Count de Lemos managed that intrigue by the panderism of Signor de Santillane, determined to be revenged on the whole knot. To this end he waited on the Duke of Uzeda, and discovered the whole affair. The duke, overjoyed at such a fine opportunity of ruining his enemy, did not fail to bestir himself. He laid his information before the king, and painted the prince's danger in the most lively colours. His majesty was much angered, and shewed that he was so, by sending Sirena to the nunnery provided for such frail sisters, banishing the Count de Lemos, and condemning Gil Blas to perpetual imprisonment.

This, pursued Scipio, is what my friend told me. Hence,

you gather your misfortune to be the Duke of Uzeda's handiwork, or rather Calderona's.

Thus it seemed probable that my affairs might be reinstated in time; that the Duke of Lerma, chagrined at his nephew's banishment, would move heaven and earth for that nobleman's recall; and it might not be too much to expect that his excellency would not forget me. What a delicate gipsy is hope! She wheedled me out of all anxiety about my shattered fortunes, and made me as light-hearted as if I had good reason to be so. My prison looked not like the dungeon of perpetual misery, but like the vestibule to a more distinguished station. For thus ran the train of my reasoning: Don Fernando Borgia, Father Jerome of Florence, and more than all, Friar Louis of Aliaga, who may thank him for his place about the king's person, are the prime minister's partisans. With the aid of such powerful friends, his excellency will bear down all opposition, even supposing no change to take place in the political barometer. But his majesty's health is very precarious. The first act of a new reign would be to recall the Count de Lemos; he would not feel himself at home in the young monarch's presence till he had introduced me at court; and the young monarch would not sit easy on his throne till he had showered benefits on my head. Thus, feasting by anticipation on the pleasures of futurity, I became callous to existing evils. The two bags, snug in the goldsmith's custody, were no bad doubles to the part which hope acted in this shifting pantomime.

It was impossible not to express my gratitude to Scipio for his zeal and honesty. I offered him half the salvage, but he rejected it. I expect, said he, a very different acknowledgment. Astonished as much at his mysterious claim as at his refusal, I asked what more I could do for him. Let us never part, answered he. Allow me to link my fate with yours. I feel for you what I never felt for any other master. And on my part, my good fellow, said I, you may rest assured that your attachment is not thrown away. You caught my fancy at first sight. We must have been born under Libra or Gemini, where friendship is lord of the ascendant. I willingly accept your proffered partnership, and will commence business by prevailing with the warden to immure you along with me in this tower. That is the

very thing, exclaimed he. You were beforehand with me, for I was just going to beg that favour. Your company is dearer to me than liberty itself. I shall only just go to Madrid now and then, to snuff the gale of the ministerial atmosphere, and try whether any scent lies which may be favourable for your pursuit. Thus will you combine in me a bosom friend, a trusty messenger, and an unsuspected spy.

These advantages were too important for me to forego them. I therefore kept so useful a person about me, with leave of the obliging warden, who would not stand in the way of so soothing a relief to the weariness of solitude.

CHAPTER VIII

SCIPIO'S FIRST JOURNEY TO MADRID: ITS OBJECT AND SUCCESS. GIL BLAS FALLS SICK. THE CONSEQUENCE OF HIS ILLNESS

If it is a common proverb that our direst enemies are those of our own household, the converse ought equally to be admitted among the saws of a more candid experience. After such incontestable proofs of Scipio's zeal, he became to me like another self. All distinction of place was confounded between Gil Blas and his secretary; all insolence was dropped on the one hand, all cringing on the other. Their lodging, bed, and board were in common.

Scipio's conversation was of a very lively turn; he might have been dubbed the Spanish Momus, without any derogation to the Punch of the Pantheon. But he had a long head, as well as a fanciful brain, combining the characters of counsellor and jester. My friend, said I, one day, what do you think of writing to the Duke of Lerma? It could, methinks, do no harm. Why, as to that, answered he, the great are such cameleons, that there is no knowing where to have them. At all events you may risk it; though I would not lay the postage of your letter on its success. The minister loves you, it is true; but then political love lacks memory, as much as personal love lacks visual discrimination. Out of sight, out of mind! is at once the motto and the stigma of these gentry.

True as this may be in the general, replied I, my patron is a glorious exception. His kindness lives in my recollection. I am persuaded that he suffers for my sufferings, and that they are incessantly preying on his spirits. We must give him credit for only waiting till the king's anger shall pass away. Be it so, resumed he; I wish you may not reckon without your host. Assail his excellency then with an epistle to stir the waters. I will engage to deliver it into his own hands. Pen, ink, and paper being brought, I composed a specimen of eloquence which Scipio declared to be a paragon of pathos, and Tordesillas preferred, for the cant of sermonizing prolixity, to the old archbishop's homilies.

I flattered myself that there would be tears in the Duke of Lerma's eyes, and distraction in his aspect, at the detail of miseries which existed only on paper. In that assurance, I despatched my messenger, who no sooner got to Madrid, than he went to the minister's. Meeting with an old domestic of my acquaintance, he had no difficulty in gaining access to the duke. My lord, said Scipio to his excellency, as he delivered the packet, one of your most devoted servants, lying at his length on straw, in a damp and dreary dungeon at Segovia, most humbly supplicates for the perusal of this letter, which a tender-hearted turnkey has furnished him with the means of writing. The minister opened the letter, and glanced over the contents. But though he found there a motive and a cue for passion, enough to amaze all his faculties at once, far from drowning the floor with briny secretions, he cleaved the ear of his household, and smote the heart of my courier with horrid speech: 'Friend, tell Santillane that he has a great deal of impudence to address me, after so rank an offence, worthily confronted by the severe sentence of the king. Under that sentence let the wretch drag out his days, nor look to my mediation for a respite.

Scipio, though neither dull nor muddy-mettled, began to be unpregnant of this defeated cause. Yet he was not so pigeon-livered as to retire without an effort in my favour. My lord, replied he, this poor prisoner will give up the ghost with grief, at the recital of your excellency's displeasure. The duke answered like a prime minister, with a supercilious corrugation of features, and a decisive revolution of his front to some more prosperous suitor. This he

did, to cover his own share in the shame of pimping; and such treatment must all those hireling scavengers expect, who rake in the filth and ordure of rotten statesmen, courtiers, and politicians.

My secretary came back to Segovia and delivered the result of his mission. And now behold me, sunk deeper than on the first day of my imprisonment, in the gulf of affliction and despair! The Duke of Lerma's turning king's evidence gave a hanging posture to my affairs. My courage was run out; and though they did all they could to keep up my spirits, the agitation and distress of my mind threw me into a fever.

The warden, who took a lively interest in my recovery, fancying in his unmedical head that physicians cured fevers, brought me a double dose of death in two of that doleful deity's most practised executioners. Signor Gil Blas, said he, as he ushered in their grisly forms, here are two godsons of Hippocrates, who are come to feel your pulse, and to augment the number of their trophies in your person. I was so prejudiced against the whole faculty, that I should certainly have given them a very discouraging reception, had life retained its usual charms in my estimation; but being bent on my departure from this vale of tears, I felt obliged to Tordesillas for hastening my journey, by a safer conveyance than the crime of suicide.

My good sir, said one of the pair, your recovery will, under Providence, depend on your entire confidence in our skill. Implicit confidence! answered I: with your assistance, I am fully persuaded that a few days will place me beyond the reach of fever, and all the shocks that flesh is heir to. Yes! with the blessing of Heaven, rejoined he, it is a consummation devoutly to be wished, and easily to be effected. At all events, our best endeavours shall not be wanting. And indeed it was no joke: for they got me into such fine training for the other world, that few of my material particles were left in this. Already had Don Andrew, observing me fumble with the sheets, and smile upon my fingers' ends, and thinking there was but one way, sent for a Franciscan to shew it me: already had the good father, having mumbled over the salvation of my soul, retired to the refection of his own body: and my own opinion leaned to the immediate necessity of making a good end. I beckoned Scipio to my

bedside. My dear friend, said I, in the faint accents of a tortured and evacuated patient. I give and bequeath to you one of the bags in Gabriel's possession; the other you must carry to my father and mother in the Asturias, who, if still living, must be in narrow circumstances. But, alas! I fear, they have not been able to bear up against my ingratitude. Muscada's report of my unnatural behaviour must have brought their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Should Heaven have fortified their tender hearts against my indifference, you will give them the bag of doubloons, with assurances of my dying remorse: and, if they are no more, I charge you to lay out the money in masses for the repose of their souls and of mine. Then did I stretch out my hand, which he bathed in silent tears. It is not always true, that the mourning of an heir is mirth in masquerade.

For some hours I fancied myself outward-bound, and on the point of sailing; but the wind changed. My pilots having quitted the helm, and left the vessel to the steerage of nature, the danger of shipwreck disappeared. The fever, mutinying against its commanding officers, gave all their prognostics the lie, and acted contrary to general orders. I got better by degrees in mind as well as in body. My consolation was all derived from within. I looked at wealth and honours with the eye of a dying anchorite, and blessed the malady which restored my soul. I abjured courts, politics, and the Duke of Lerma. If ever my prison doors were opened, it was my fixed resolve to buy a cottage, and live like a philosopher.

My bosom friend applauded my design, and to further its execution, undertook a second journey to solicit my release, by the intervention of a clever girl about the person of the prince's nurse. He contended that a prison was a prison still, in spite of kind indulgence and good cheer. In this I agreed, and gave him leave to depart, with a fervent prayer to Heaven that we might soon take possession of our hermitage.

CHAPTER IX

SCIPIO'S SECOND JOURNEY TO MADRID. GIL BLAS IS SET AT LIBERTY ON CERTAIN CONDITIONS. THEIR DEPARTURE FROM THE TOWER OF SEGOVIA, AND CONVERSATION ON THEIR JOURNEY

WHILE waiting for Scipio's return from Madrid, I began a course of study. Tordesillas furnished me with more books than I wanted. He borrowed them from an old officer who could not read, but had fitted up a magnificent library, that he might pass for a man of learning. Above all, I delighted in moral essays and treatises, because they abounded in common-places according with my antipathy to courts and philosophic relish of solitude.

Three weeks elapsed before I heard a syllable from my negotiator, who returned at length with a cheerful countenance, and news to the following effect: By the intercession of a hundred pistoles with the chambermaid, and her intercession with her mistress, the Prince of Spain has been prevailed with to plead for your enlargement with his royal father. I hastened hither to announce these happy tidings, and must return immediately to put the last hand to my work. With these words, he left me, and went back to court.

At the week's end my expeditious agent returned, with the intelligence that the prince had procured my liberty, not without some difficulty. On the same day my generous keeper confirmed the assurance in person, with the kindest congratulations, and the following notice: Your prison doors are open, but on two conditions, which I am sorry that my duty obliges me to announce, because they will probably be disagreeable to you. His majesty expressly forbids you to shew your face at court, or to be found within the limits of the two Castiles on this day month. I am extremely sorry that you are interdicted from court. And I am delighted at it, answered I. Witness all the powers above! I asked the king for only one favour; he has granted me two.

With my liberty thus confirmed, I hired a couple of mules, on which we mounted the next day, after taking leave of

ogollos, and thanking Tordesillas a thousand times for all is instances of friendship. We set forward cheerfully on ne road to Madrid, to draw our deposit out of Signor Gariel's hands, amounting to a thousand doubloons. On the oad my fellow-traveller observed: If we are not rich enough p purchase a splendid property, we can at least secure ease nd competency to ourselves. A cabin, answered I, would e large enough for my most ambitious thoughts. Though arcely at the middle period of life, the world has lost its harms for me; its hopes, its fears, its cares, its duties, are ll absorbed in the selfishness of philosophical retirement. ndependently of these principles, I can assure you I have ainted for myself a rural landscape, with a foreground f innocent pleasures, and pastoral simplicity in the perpective. Already does the enamel of the meadows glitter nder my eyes; already does the river's murmur accord with ne winged chorus of the grove: hunting exasperates the uanly virtues, and fishing preaches patience. Only figure o yourself, my friend, what a continual round of amuseient solitude may furnish, and you will pant to be admitted f her crew. Then for the economy of our table, the mplest will be the cheapest, and of course the best. Unadulterated Ceres shall be our official caterer: when hunger nall have tamed our fastidious appetites into sobriety, a mumbled crust will relish like an ortolan. The supreme elight of eating is not in the thing ate, but in the palate of im who eats; a proposition in culinary philosophy, proved y the frequent loathing of my own stomach, through a long eries of ministerial dinners. Abstemiousness is a luxury f the most exquisite refinement, and the best recipe in the nateria medica.

"With your good leave, Signor Gil Blas, interrupted my ecretary, I am not altogether of your mind respecting the iscious treat of abstemiousness. Why should we mess like he bankrupt sages of antiquity? Surely we may indulge he carnal man a little, without any reasonable offence to ne spiritual. Since we have, by the blessing of Providence nd my forecast, wherewithal to keep the spit and the spigot n exercise, do not let us take up our abode with famine and retchedness. As soon as we get settled, we must stock our ellar, and establish a respectable larder, like people who now what is what, and do not separate themselves from the

vulgar crowd to renounce the good things of this life, but to taste them with a more exquisite relish. As Hesiod says,

> Enjoy thy riches with a liberal soul;
> Plenteous the feast, and smiling be the bowl.

And again,

> To stint the wine a frugal husband shows,
> When from the middle of the cask it flows.

What the devil, Master Scipio, interrupted I in my turn, you can cap verses out of the Greek poets! And pray where did you get acquainted with Hesiod? In very learned company, answered he. I lived some time with a walking dictionary at Salamanca, a fellow up to the elbows in quotation and commentary. He could put a large volume together like a house of cards. His library furnished him with a hodge-podge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin commonplaces, which he translated into buckram Castilian. As I was his transcriber, some tags of verses, stings of epigrams, and sage truisms stuck by the way. With such an apparatus, replied I, your memory must be most philosophically stocked. But, not to lose sight of our future prospects, whereabouts in Spain had we best fix our Socratic abode? My voice is for Arragon, resumed my counsellor. We shall there enjoy all the beauties of nature, and lead the life of Paradise. Well, then, for Arragon! said I. May it teem with all the dear delights that youthful poets fancy when they dream!

CHAPTER X

THEIR DOINGS AT MADRID. THE RENCOUNTER OF GIL BLAS IN THE STREET, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

On our arrival in Madrid, we alighted at a little public-house where Scipio had been accustomed to put up, whence our first visit was to my banker, Salero. He received us very cordially, and expressed the highest satisfaction at my release. Indeed, added he, your untoward fate touched me so nearly as to change my views of a political alliance. The fortunes of courtiers are like castles in the air: so I have

married my daughter Gabriela to a wealthy trader. You have acted very wisely, answered I; for besides that a bird in the hand is worth two in a bush, when a plodding citizen aspires to the honour of bringing a man of fashion into his family, he very often has an impertinent puppy for his son-in-law.

Then changing the topic, and coming to the point: Signor Gabriel, pursued I, we came to talk a little about the two thousand pistoles which . . . . Your money is all ready, said the goldsmith, interrupting me. He then took us into his closet, and delivered the two bags, carefully labelled with my name on them.

I thanked Salero for his exactness, and heaven in my sleeve for my escape from his daughter. At our inn we counted over the money, and found it right, deducting fifty doubloons for the expenses of my enlargement. Our thoughts were now wholly bent upon Arragon. My secretary undertook to buy a carriage and two mules. It was my office to provide household and body linen. During my peregrinations for that purpose, I met Baron Steinbach, the officer in the German Guards with whom Don Alphonso had been brought up.

I touched my hat to him; he knew me again, and returned my greeting warmly. My joy is extreme, said I, at seeing your lordship in such fine health, to say nothing of my wish to inquire after Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso de Leyva. They are both in Madrid, answered he, and staying at my house. They came to town about three months ago, to be presented on occasion of Don Alphonso's promotion. He has been appointed Governor of Valencia, on the score of old family claims, without having in any shape pushed his interest at court. Nothing could be more grateful to his feelings, or prove more strongly our royal master's goodness, who delights to recognize the merits of ancestry in the persons of their descendants.

Though I knew more of this matter than Steinbach, I kept my knowledge in the background. Yet so lively was my impatience to hail my old masters, that he would not damp my ardour by delay. I had a mind to try Don Alphonso, whether he still retained his regard for me. He was playing at chess with Baroness Steinbach. On my entrance, he started up from his game, ran towards me, and

squeezing me tight in his embrace: Santillane, said he, with demonstrations of the sincerest joy, at length, then, you are restored to my heart. I am delighted at it! It was not my fault that we ever parted. You may remember how strongly I urged you not to withdraw from the Castle of Leyva. You were deaf to my entreaties. But I must not chide your obstinacy, because its motive was the peace of the family. Yet you ought to have let me hear from you, and to have spared my fruitless inquiries at Grenada, where my brother-in-law, Don Ferdinand, sent me word that you were.

And now tell me what you are doing at Madrid. Of course you have some situation here. Be assured that I shall always take a lively interest in your concerns. Sir, answered I, it is but four months since I occupied a considerable post at court. I had the honour of being the Duke of Lerma's confidential secretary. Can it be possible? exclaimed Don Alphonso, as if he could scarcely believe his ears. What, were you so near the person of the prime minister? I then related how I had gained and lost his favour, and ended with avowing my determination to buy a cottage and garden with the wreck of my shattered fortunes.

The son of Don Cæsar heard me attentively, and made this answer: My dear Gil Blas, you know how I have always loved you; nor shall you longer be fortune's puppet. I will set you above her vagaries, by securing you an independence. Since you declare for a country life, a little estate of ours near Lirias, about four leagues from Valencia, shall be settled on you. You are acquainted with the spot. Such a present we can make, without putting ourselves to the least inconvenience. I can answer for my father's joining in the act, and for Seraphina's entire approbation.

I threw myself at Don Alphonso's feet, who raised me immediately. More penetrated by his affection than by his bounty, I pressed his hand and said, Sir, your conduct charms me. Your noble gift is the more welcome, as it precedes the knowledge of a service it has been in my power to render you; and I had rather owe it to your generosity, than to your gratitude. This governor of my making did not know what to understand by the hint, and

ssed for an explanation. I gave it in full, to his utter tonishment. Neither he nor Baron Steinbach could ever ve the slightest suspicion that the government of Valencia as owing to my interest at court. Yet having no reason doubt the fact, my friend proposed to grant me an annui- of two thousand ducats, in addition to the little farm at rias.

Hold your hand, Signor Don Alphonso! exclaimed I at is offer. You must not set my avarice afloat again. I am yself a living witness, that fortune may give superfluities her favourites, but has no competence to bestow. With easure will I accept of the estate at Lirias, where my esent property will be sufficient for all my wants. Rather an increase my cares with my possessions, I would build hospital out of my existing funds. Riches are a burden: id it must be a foolish animal that would bear fardels in e manger or the field.

While we were talking after this fashion, Don Cæsar came . His joy was not less than his son's at the sight of me; id being informed of the family obligations, he again ssed me to accept of the annuity, which I again refused. hen the writings were drawn, the father and son made the signment their joint act and deed, transferring to me the e simple, and putting me in immediate possession. My secre- ry half stared the eyes out of his head, when I told him we id a landed estate of our own, and how we came by it. What the value of this little freehold? said he. Five hundred ucats per annum, answered I, and the farm in high cultiva- on, within a ring fence. I have often been there during y stewardship. There is a small house on the banks of e Guadalaviar, in a little hamlet, surrounded by a arming country.

What pleases me better than all, cried Scipio, is that we all have plenty of sporting, rare living, and excellent ne. Come, master, let us leave this crowded city, and sten to our hermitage. I long to be there as much as u can do, answered I; but I must first go to the Asturias. y father and mother are not in comfortable circum- ances. They shall therefore end their days with me at rias. Heaven, perhaps, has thrown this windfall in my y to try my filial duty, and would punish me for the glect of it. Scipio approved my purpose, and urged its

speedy execution. Yes, my friend, said I, we will set out as soon as possible. I shall consider it as my dear delight to share the gifts of fortune with the authors of my existence. We shall soon be settled in our country retreat; and then will I write these two Latin verses over the door of my farm-house, in letters of gold, for the pious edification of my rustic neighbours:

Inveni portum. Spes et fortuna, valete.
Sat me lusistis; ludite nunc alios.

BOOK THE TENTH

CHAPTER I

GIL BLAS SETS OUT FOR THE ASTURIAS; AND PASSES THROUGH VALLADOLID, WHERE HE GOES TO SEE HIS OLD MASTER, DOCTOR SANGRADO. BY ACCIDENT, HE COMES ACROSS SIGNOR MANUEL ORDONNEZ, GOVERNOR OF THE HOSPITAL

JUST as I was arranging matters to take my departure from Madrid, and go with Scipio to the Asturias, Paul V. gave the Duke of Lerma a cardinal's hat. This pope, wishing to establish the inquisition in the kingdom of Naples, invested the minister with the purple, and by that means hoped to bring King Philip over to so pious and praiseworthy a design. Those who were best acquainted with this new member of the sacred college, thought much like myself, that the church was in a fair way for apostolical purity, after so ghostly an acquisition.

Scipio, who would have liked better to see me once more blazing at court, than either cloistered or rusticated, advised me to shew my face at the cardinal's audience. Perhaps, said he, his eminence, finding you at large by the king's order, may think it unnecessary to affect any further displeasure against you, and may even reinstate you in his service. My good friend Scipio, answered I, you seem to forget that my liberty was granted only on condition of making myself scarce in the two Castiles. Besides, can you suppose me so soon inclined to become an absentee from my

omain of Lirias? I have told you before, and I tell it you nce again: Though the Duke of Lerma should restore me o his good graces, though he should even offer me Don odrigo de Calderona's place, I would refuse it. My esolution is taken: I mean to go and find out my parents at viedo, and carry them with me to Valencia. As for you, ay good fellow, if you repent of having linked your fate ith mine, you have only to say so: I am ready to give you alf of my ready money, and you may stay at Madrid, here fortune puts on her kindest smiles to those who woo er lustily.

What then! replied my secretary, a little affected by these ords, can you suspect me of any unwillingness to follow ou into your retreat? The very idea is an injury to my al and my attachment. What, Scipio! that faithful ppendage, who would willingly have passed the remnant his days with you in the tower of Segovia, rather than bandon you to your wretched fate, can he feel sorrowful the prospect of an abode, where a thousand rural delights e waiting to smile on his arrival? No, no, I have not a ish to turn you aside from your resolution. Nor can I frain from owning my malicious drift; when I advised you shew your face at the Duke of Lerma's audience, it was r the purpose of ascertaining whether any seedlings of nbition were scattered among the fallows of your philo- phy. Since that point is settled, and you are mortified to the pomps and vanities of the world; let us make the best our way from court, to go and suck in with Zephyrus d Flora the innocent, delicious pleasures so luxuriant in e nursery of our imaginations.

In fact, we soon afterwards took our departure together, a a chaise drawn by two good mules, driven by a postillion om I had added to my establishment. We stopped e first day at Alcala de Henarès, and the second at Se- via, whence, without stopping to see our generous warden, ordesillas, we went forward to Penáfiel on the Duero, and e next day to Valladolid. At sight of this large town, I uld not help fetching a deep sigh. My companion, sur- sed at that conscientious ventilation, inquired the reason it. My good fellow, said I, it is because I practised dicine here for a long time. It gives me the horrors, en now, to think of my unexpiated murders. The whole

list of killed and wounded are mustered in battle-array yonder: the tomb and the hospital yawn with their disgorged inhabitants, who are rushing on to tear me piecemeal, and exact the vengeance due to the drenched crew. What a dreadful fancy! said my secretary. In truth, Signor de Santillane, your nature is too tender. Why should you be shocked at the common course of exchange in your branch of trade? Look at all the oldest physicians: their withers are unwrung. What can exceed the self-complacency with which they view the exits of patients, and the entrances of diseases? Natural constitution bears the brunt of all their failures, and medical infallibility takes the credit of lucky accidents.

It is very true, replied I, that Doctor Sangrado, on whose practice I formed myself, was like the rest of the old physicians in point of self-complacency. It was to little purpose that twenty people in a day yielded to his prowess; he was so persuaded that bleeding in the arm and copious libations of warm water were specifics for every case, that instead of doubting whether the death of his patients might not possibly invalidate the efficacy of his prescriptions, he ascribed the result to a vacillating compliance with his system. By all the powers! cried Scipio with a burst of laughter, you open to me an incomparable character. If you have any curiosity to be better acquainted with him, said I, it may be gratified to-morrow, should Sangrado be still living, and resident at Valladolid: but it is highly improbable; for he had one foot in the grave when I left him several years ago.

Our first care, on putting up at the inn, was to inquire after this doctor. We were told that he was not dead; but being incapacitated by age from paying visits or any other vigorous exertions, he had been superseded by three or four other doctors who had risen into repute by a new practice accomplishing the same end by different means. We determined on lying by for a day at Valladolid, as well to rest our mules, as to call on Signor Sangrado. About ten o'clock next morning we knocked at his door; and found him sitting in his elbow-chair, with a book in his hand. He rose on our entrance; advanced to meet us with a firm step for a man of seventy, and begged to know our business. My worthy and approved good master, said I, have you lost all

ecollection of an old pupil? There was formerly one Gil Blas, as you may remember, a boarder in your house, and or some time your deputy. What! is it you, Santillane? nswered he, with a cordial embrace. I should not have nown you again. It, however, gives me great pleasure to ee you once more. What have you been doing since we arted? Doubtless you have made medicine your profession. It was very strongly my inclination so to do, plied I; but imperious circumstances made me reluctantly bandon so illustrious a calling.

So much the worse, rejoined Sangrado: with the principles ou sucked in under my tuition, you would have become a hysician of the first skill and eminence, with the guiding fluence of heaven to defend you from the dangerous llurements of chemistry. Ah, my son! pursued he with mournful air, what a change in practice within these few ears! The whole honour and dignity of the art is compromised. That mystery, by whose inscrutable decrees ne lives of men have in all ages been determined, is now id open to the rude, untutored gaze of blockheads, novices, nd mountebanks. Facts are stubborn things; and ere ng the very stones will cry aloud against the rascality of ese new practitioners: *lapides clamabunt!* Why, sir, here are fellows in this town, calling themselves physians, who drag their degraded persons at the *currus riumphalis antimonii*, or as it should properly be transted, the cart's tail of antimony. Apostates from the ith of Paracelsus, idolaters of filthy *kermes*, healers at hapzard, who make all the science of medicine to consist in e preparation and prescription of drugs. What a change ave I to announce to you! There is not one stone left upon nother in the whole structure which our great predecessors id raised. Bleeding in the feet, for example, so rarely ractised in better times, is now among the fashionable illies of the day. That gentle, civilized system of evacuon which prevailed under my auspices is subverted by the ign of anarchy and emetics, of quackery and poison. In ort, chaos is come again! Every one orders what seems od in his own eyes; there is no deference to the authority of ncient wisdom; our masters are laid upon the shelf, and their ioms not one tittle the more regarded, for being delivered languages as defunct as the subjects of their application.

However desirable it might seem to laugh at so whimsical a declamation, I had the good manners to resist the impulse; and not only that, but to inveigh bitterly against *kermes*, without knowing whether it was a vegetable or an animal, and to pour forth a commination of curses against the authors and inventors of so diabolical an engine. Scipio, observing my by-play in this scene, had a mind to come in for his share in the banter. Most venerable prop of the true practice, said he to Sangrado, as I am descended in the third generation from a physician of the old school, give me leave to join you in your philippic against chemical conspiracies. My late illustrious progenitor, heaven forgive him all his sins! was so warm a partisan of Hippocrates, that he often came to blows with ignorant pretenders, who vomited forth blasphemies against that high priest of the faculty. What is bred in the bone will not come out of the flesh: I could willingly inflict tortures and death with my own hands on those rash innovators whose daring enormities you have characterized with such accuracy of discrimination and such force of language. When wretches like these gain an ascendancy in civilized society, can we wonder at the disjointed condition of the world?

The times are even more out of joint than you are aware of, said the doctor. My book against the vanities and delusions of the new practice might as well have fallen still-born from the press; it seems, if anything, to have acted by contraries, and to have exasperated heresy. The apothecaries, like the Titans of old, heaping potion upon pill, and invading the Olympus of medicine, think themselves fully qualified to usurp and maintain the throne, now that it is only thought necessary to set open the doors, and to drive the enemy out at the portal or the postern by main force. They go to the length of infusing their deadly drugs into apozems and cordials, and then set themselves up against the most eminent of the fraternity. This contagion has spread its influence even among the cloisters. There are monks in our convents who unite surgery and pharmacy to the labours of the confessional. Those medical baboons are always dipping their paws into chemistry, and inventing compositions strong enough to lay a scene of ecclesiastical mortality in the temporary abodes of peace and religion. Now there are in Valladolid above sixty religious houses for

oth sexes; judge what ravage must have been made there y unmerciful pumping and the lancet misapplied. Signor angrado, said I, you are perfectly in the right to give these oisoners no quarter. I utter groan for groan with you, nd heave the philanthropic sigh over the invaded lives of ur fellow-creatures, sinking under the fell attack of so eterodox a practice. It fills me with horror to think what dead weight chemistry may one day be to medicine, just s adulterated coin operates on national credit. Far be nat evil day from this generation.

Just at this climax of our discourse, in came an old male servant, with a salver for the doctor, on which was little light roll and a glass with two decanters, the one lled with water and the other with wine. After he had aten a slice, he washed it down with a diluted beverage, wo parts water to one of wine; but this temperate use of ne good creature did not at all save him from the acrimony my ridicule. So so, good master doctor, said I, you are irly caught in the fact. You are a wine-bibber! you, ho have entered the lists like a knight-errant against that nauthenticated fermentation? you, who reached your and climacteric on the strength of the pure element? ow long have you been so at odds with yourself? Your me of life can be no excuse for the alteration; since, in one assage of your writings, you define old age to be a natural nsumption, which withers and attenuates the system; and an inference from that position, you reprobate the ignor- ce of those writers who dignify wine with the appellation old men's milk. What can you say, therefore, in your vn defence?

You belabour me most unjustly, answered the old phy- ian. If I drank neat wine, you would have a right to eat me as a deserter from my own standard; but your eyes ay convince you that my wine is well mixed. Another resy, my dear apostle of the wells and fountains! replied Recollect how you rated the canon Sedillo for drinking ne, though plentifully dashed with the salubrious fluid. vn modestly and candidly that your theory was unfounded d fanciful, and that wine is not a poisonous liquor, as you ve so falsely and scandalously libelled it in your works, y further than, like any other of nature's bounties, it ay be abused to excess.

This lecture sat rather uneasily on our doctor's feelings, as a candidate for consistency. He could not deny his inveteracy against the use of wine in all his publications; but pride and vanity not allowing him to acknowledge the justice of my attack on his apostasy, he was left without a word to say for himself. Not wishing to push my sarcasm beyond the bounds of good humour, I changed the subject; and after a few minutes' longer stay, took my leave, gravely exhorting him to maintain his ground against the new practitioners. Courage, Signor Sangrado! said I: never be weary of setting your wits against *kermes;* and deafen the health-dispensing tribe with your thunders against the use of bleeding in the feet. If, spite of all your zeal and affection for medical orthodoxy, this empiric generation should succeed in supplanting true and legitimate practice, it will be at least your consolation to have exhausted your best endeavours in the support of truth and reason.

As my secretary and myself were walking to the inn, making our observations in high glee on the doctor's entertaining and original character, a man from fifty-five to sixty years of age happened to pass near us in the street, walking with his eyes fixed on the ground, and a large rosary in his hand. I conned over the distinctive cut of his appearance most cunningly, and was rewarded in the recognition of Signor Manuel Ordonnez, that faithful trustee for the affairs of the hospital, of whom so honourable mention is made in the first volume of these true and instructive memoirs. Accosting him with the most profound and unquestionable tokens of respect, I paid my compliments in due form and order to the venerable and trust-worthy Signor Manuel Ordonnez, the man of all the world in whose hands the interests of the poor and needy are most safely and beneficially placed. At these words he looked me steadfastly in the face, and answered that my features were not altogether strange to him, but that he could not recollect where he had seen me. I used to go backwards and forwards to your house, replied I, when one of my friends, by name Fabricio Nunez, was in your service. Ah! I recollect the circumstance at once, rejoined the worthy director with a cunning leer, and have good reason to do so; for you were a brace of pleasant lads, and were by no means backward in the little scape-grace tricks of youth and

experience. Well! and what is become of poor Fabricio? Whenever he comes across my thoughts, I cannot help feeling a little uneasy about his temporal and eternal welfare.

It was to relieve your mind upon that subject, said I to signor Manuel, that I have taken the liberty of stopping you in the street. Fabricio is settled at Madrid, where he employs himself in publishing miscellanies and collections. What do you mean by miscellanies and collections? replied he. I mean, resumed I, that he writes in verse and prose, from epic poems and the highest branches of philosophy, down to plays, novels, epigrams, and riddles. In short, he is a lad of universal genius, and most exemplary benevolence; sometimes modestly taking to himself the credit of his own compositions, and sometimes lending out his talents to the literary ambition of those noblemen who write for their own amusement, but wish their names to be concealed, except from a chosen circle. By traffic like this he sits at the very first tables. But how does he sit at his own? said the director: upon what terms does he live with his baker? Not quite so confidentially as with people of fashion, answered I; for between ourselves, I take him to be quite as much out at elbows as ever Job was. More bonds and judgments against him than ever Job had, take my word for it! replied the donnez. Let him lick the spittle of his titled friends and patrons till his stomach heaves at the nauseating saliva; his printed dedications and his oral flattery, in spite of all the fawning and all the toad-eating, which constitute the stock-in-trade of his profession, with all the profits of his works, whether by subscription or ordinary publication, will not bring grist enough to his mill, to keep hunger from the door. And if what I say does not turn out to be true! He will come to the dogs at last.

Nothing more likely! replied I; for he cohabits with the Muses already; and many a plain man has found, to his cost, that there is no keeping company with the sisters, without being worried by their bullying brethren. My friend Fabricio would have done much better by remaining quietly with your lordship; he would now have been lying on a bed of roses, and everything he had touched would have turned to gold. He would at least have been in a very snug berth, said Manuel. He was a great favourite of mine;

and I meant, by a regular gradation from subaltern to principal situations, to have established him in ease and affluence on the basis of public charity; but the foolish fellow took it into his head to set up for a wit. He wrote a play, and brought it out at the theatre in this town: the piece went off tolerably well, and nothing thenceforth would serve his turn but commencing author by profession. Lope de Vega, in his estimation, was but a type of him: preferring, therefore, the intoxicating vapour of public applause to the plain roast and boiled of this substantial ordinary, he came to me for his discharge. It was to no purpose for me to argue the point, or to prove to him what a silly cur he was, to drop the bone and run after the shadow: the mad blockhead was so suffocated by the smother of authorship, that the instinctive dread of fire could not rouse his alacrity to escape burning. In short, he was miserably unconscious of his own interest, as his successor can testify: for he, possessing practical good sense, though without half Fabricio's quickness and versatility, makes it his whole study and delight to go through his business in a workmanlike manner, and to fall in with all my little ways. In return for such good conduct, I pushed him forward in a manner corresponding with his deserts; and he unites in his own person, even at this time of day, two offices in the hospital, the least lucrative of which would be more than sufficient to place any honest man at his ease, though encumbered with a yearly teeming wife.

CHAPTER II

GIL BLAS CONTINUES HIS JOURNEY, AND ARRIVES IN SAFETY AT OVIEDO. THE CONDITION OF HIS FAMILY. HIS FATHER'S DEATH, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

From Valladolid we got to Oviedo in four days, without any untoward accident on the road, in spite of the proverb, which says, that robbers lay their ears to the ground, when pilgrims are going with rich offerings, and traders are riding with fat purses. It would have been a feasible, as well as a tempting speculation. Two tenants of a subterraneous abode might have presented an aspect to have frightened our doubloons into a surrender; for courage was not one of

the qualities I had imbibed at court; and Bertrand, my mule-driver, seemed not to be of a temper to get his brains blown out in defending a purse into which he had no free ingress. Scipio was the only one of the party who was anything of a bully.

It was night when we came into town. Our lodgings were at an inn near my uncle, Gil Perez, the canon. I was very desirous of ascertaining the circumstances of my parents before my first interview with them; and, in order to gain that information, it was impossible to make my inquiries in a better channel than through my landlord and landlady, into the lines of whose faces you could not look without being satisfied that they knew every tittle of their neighbours' concerns. As it turned out, the landlord reckoned me after a diligent perusal of my features, and cried out: By Saint Antony of Padua! this is the son of the honest usher, Blas of Santillane. Ay, indeed! said the hostess; and so it is: without a single muscle altered! just for all the world that same little stripling Gil Blas, of whom we used to say that he was as saucy as he was high. It brings old times to my memory! when he used to come hither with his bottle under his arm, to fetch wine for his uncle's supper.

Madam, said I, you have a most inveterate memory; but for goodness' sake change the subject, and tell me the modern news of my family. My father and mother are doubtless in no very enviable situation. In good truth, you may say that, answered the landlady: you may rack your brains as long as you like, but you will never think of anything half so miserable as what they are suffering at this present moment. Gil Perez, good soul! is defunct all down one side by a stroke of the palsy, and the other half of him is little better than a corpse; we cannot expect him to last long: then your father, who went to live with his reverence a little while ago, is troubled with an inflammation of the lungs, and is standing, as a body may say, quavery-mavery between life and death; while your mother, who is not over and above hale and hearty herself, is obliged to nurse them both.

On this intelligence, which made me feel some compunctious yearnings of nature, I left Bertrand with my stud and baggage at the inn: then, with my secretary at my heels, who would not desert me in my time of need, I repaired to

my uncle's house. The moment I came within my mother's reach, a natural emotion of maternal instinct unfolded to her who I was, before her eyes could possibly have run over the traces of my countenance. Son, said she, with a melancholy expression, after having embraced me, come and be present at your father's death; your visit is just in time to take in all the piteous circumstances of so deplorable an event. With this heart-rending reception, she led me by the hand into a chamber where the wretched Blas of Santillane, stretched on a comfortless bed, in cold and dismal accord with the thinness of his fortunes, was just entering on the last great act of human nature. Though surrounded by the shades of death, he was not quite unconscious of what was passing about him. My dearest friend, said my mother, here is your son Gil Blas, who entreats your forgiveness for all his undutiful behaviour, and is come to ask your blessing before you die. At these tidings my father opened his eyes, which were on the point of closing for ever: he fixed them upon me; and reading in my countenance, notwithstanding the awful brink on which he stood, that I was a sincere mourner for his loss, his feelings were recalled to sympathy by my sorrow. He even made an attempt to speak, but his strength was too much exhausted. I took one of his hands in mine, and while I bathed it with my tears, in speechless agony of soul, he breathed his last, as if he had only waited my arrival to pay the debt of nature, and wing his way to scenes of untried being.

This event had been too long present to my mother's mind to overwhelm her with any unparalleled affliction. Perhaps it sat more heavily on me than on her, though my father had never in his life given me any reason to feel for him as a father. But besides that mere filial instinct would have made me weep over his cold remains, I reproached myself with not having contributed to the comfort of his latter days; then, when I considered what a hard-hearted villain I had been, I seemed to myself like a monster of ingratitude, or rather like an impious parricide. My uncle, whom I afterwards saw lying at his length on another wretched couch, and in a most lamentable pickle, made me experience fresh agonies of upbraiding conscience. Unnatural son! said I, communing with

my own uneasy thoughts, behold the chastisement of heaven upon thy sins, in the disconsolate condition of thy nearest relations. Hadst thou but thrown to them the superflux of that abundance, in which before thy imprisonment thou rolledst, thou mightest have procured for them those little comforts which thy uncle's ecclesiastical pittance was too scanty to furnish, and perhaps have lengthened out the term of thy father's life.

Gil Perez had fallen into a state of second childhood, and was, though numerically upon the list of the living, in every individual organ a mere corpse. His memory, nay, his very senses had retired from their allotted stations in his system. Bootless was it for me to strain him in my pious arms, and lavish outward tokens of affection on him: they might as well have been wasted on the desert air. To as little purpose did my mother ring in his unnerved ear, that I was his nephew Gil Blas; he gazed at me with a vacant, stupid stare, and gave neither sign nor answer. Had the ties of consanguinity and gratitude been all too weak, to awaken my tender sympathy for an uncle, to whom I owed the means of my first launch into the world, the impression of helpless dotage on my senses must have softened me into something like the counterfeit of virtuous emotion.

While this scene was passing, Scipio preserved a melancholy silence, sharing in all my sorrows, and mingling his sighs with mine in the chastised luxury of friendship. But concluding that my mother, after so long an absence, might wish to have some such conversation with me, as the presence of a stranger must rather repress than promote, I drew him aside, saying, Go, my good fellow, sit down quietly at the inn, and leave me here with my only surviving parent, who might consider your company as an intrusion, while talking over family affairs. Scipio withdrew, for fear of being a clog upon our confidence; and I sat down with my mother to an interchange of communication, which lasted all night. We reciprocally gave a faithful account of all that had happened to each of us, since my first sally from Oviedo. She related, in full measure and running over, all the petty insults, disappointments, and mortifications, which she had undergone in her pilgrimage from house to house as a duenna. A

great number of these little anecdotes it would have hurt my pride that my secretary should have noted down in his biographical budget, though I had never concealed from him the ups and downs in the lottery of my own life. With all the respect I owe to my mother's sainted memory, the good lady had not the knack of going the shortest road to the end of a story; had she but pruned her own memoirs of all luxuriant circumstances, there would not have been materials for more than a tithe of her narrative.

At length she got to the end of her tether, and I began my career. With respect to my general adventures, I passed them over lightly; but when I came to speak of the visit which the son of Bertrand Muscada, the grocer of Oviedo, had paid me at Madrid, I enlarged with decent compunction on that dark article in the history of my life. I must frankly own, said I to my mother, that I gave that young fellow a very bad reception; and he, doubtless, in revenge, must have drawn a hideous outline of my moral features. He did you more than justice, I trust, answered she; for he told us that he found you so puffed and swollen with the good fortune thrust upon you by the prime minister, as scarcely to acknowledge him among your former acquaintance; and when he gave you a moving description of our miseries, you listened as if you had no interest in the tale, or knowledge of the parties. But as fathers and mothers can always find some clue for palliation in the conduct of their graceless children, we were loth to believe that you had so bad a heart. Your arrival at Oviedo justifies our favourable interpretation, and those tears which are now flowing down your cheeks, are so many pledges either of your innocence or your reformation.

Your constructions were too partial, replied I; there was a great deal of truth in young Muscada's report. When he came to see me all my faculties were engrossed by vanity and mammon; ambition, the prevailing devil which possessed me, left not a thought to throw away on the desolate condition of my parents. It therefore could be no wonder, if in such a disposition of mind I gave rather a freezing reception to a man who, accosting me in a peremptory style, took upon him to say, without mincing the matter, that it was well known I was as rich as a Jew, and therefore he advised me to send you a good round

sum, seeing that you were very much put to your shifts: nay, ne went so far as to reproach me, in phrase of more sin-erity than good manners, with my unfeeling negligence of ny family. His confounded personality stuck in my hroat; so that losing my little stock of patience, I shoved im fairly by the shoulders out of my closet. It must be onfessed that I took the administration of justice a little oo much into my own hands, being judge and party in the ame cause; neither was it proper that you should bear the runt, because the grocer was a little anti-saccharine in is phraseology; nor was his advice the less pertinent or ust, though couched in homely terms, or urged with lolodding vulgarity.

All this came plump in the teeth of my conscience, the moment I had turned Muscada out of doors. The voice of natural instinct contrived to make its way; my duty o my parents brought the blood into my face; but it was he blush of shame for its neglect, and not the glow of riumph at its performance. Yet even my remorse can ive me little credit in your eyes, since it was soon stifled n the fumes of avarice and ambition. But some time fterwards, having been safely lodged in the tower of egovia by royal mandate, I fell dangerously ill there; nd that timely remembrancer was the cause of bringing ack your son to you. So true is it, that sickness and im-risonment were my best moral tutors; for they enabled nature to resume her rights, and weaned me effectually rom the court. Henceforth all my dear delight is in olitude; and my only business in the Asturias is to entreat hat you would share with me in the mild pleasures of a etired life. If you reject not my earnest petition, I will ttend you to an estate of mine in the kingdom of Valencia, nd we will live there together very comfortably. You re of course aware that I intended to take my father hither also; but since heaven has ordained it otherwise, let me at least have the satisfaction of affording an asylum o my mother, and making amends by all the attentions n my power for the fallow seasons in the former harvest of ny filial duty.

I accept your kind intentions in very good part, said ny mother; and would take the journey without hesita-tion, if I saw no obstacles in the way. But to desert your

uncle in his present condition would be unpardonable; and I am too much accustomed to this part of the country, to like living elsewhere: nevertheless, as the proposal deserves to be maturely weighed, I will consider further of it at my leisure. At present, your father's funeral requires to be ordered and arranged. As for that, said I, we will leave it to the care of the young man whom you saw with me; he is my secretary, with as clever a head and as good a heart as you have often been acquainted with; let the business rest with him; it cannot be in better hands.

Hardly had I pronounced these words, when Scipio came back; for it was already broad day. He inquired whether he could be of any service in our present distresses. I answered that he was come just in time to receive some very important directions. As soon as he was made acquainted with the business in hand: A word to the wise! said he: the whole procession with its appropriate heraldry is already marshalled in this head of mine; you may trust me for a very pretty funeral. Have a care, said my mother, to make it plain and decent without anything like pomp or parade. It can scarcely be too humble for my husband, whom all the town knows to have been low in rank, and indigent in circumstances. Madam, replied Scipio, though he had been the meanest and most destitute of the human race, I would not bate one button in the array of his posthumous honours. My master's credit is at stake in the proper conduct of the ceremony; he has been in an ostensible situation under the Duke of Lerma, and his father ought to be buried with all the forms of state and nobility.

I thought exactly as my secretary did upon the subject; and even went so far as to bid him spare no expense on the occasion. A little leaven of vanity still fermented in the mass of my philosophy, and rose in my bosom with all the effervescence of its original lightness. I flattered myself that by lavishing posthumous honours on a father who had blessed the day of his decease by no lucrative bequest, I should instil into the conceptions of the bystanders a high sense of my generous nature. My mother, on her part, whatever airs of humility she might put on, had no dislike to seeing her husband carried out with due observance of funeral pomp and ceremony. We therefore left Scipio to do just as he pleased; and he, without a

moment's delay, adopted all the necessary measures for the display of the undertaker's liveliest fancy.

The genius of that artist was called forth but too successfully. His emblems, devices, and draperies, were so ostentatious, as to disgust instead of cajoling the natives: every individual, whether of the town or the suburbs, whether high or low, rich or poor, felt shocked and insulted by this after-thought parade. This ministerial beggar on horseback, said one, can put his hand into his pocket for his father's funeral baked meats, but never found in his heart wherewithal to furnish his living table with common necessaries. It would have been much more to the purpose, said another, to have made the old gentleman's latter days comfortable, than to have wasted such thriftless sums on a post obit act of filial munificence. In short, quips of the brain and peltings of the tongue pattered round our execrated heads. It would have been well had the storm been only a whirlwind of passion, or hurricane of words; but we were all, Scipio, Bertrand, and myself, corporally admonished of our misdeeds, on our coming out of church; they abused us like pickpockets, made mouths and odious noises as we passed, and followed Bertrand at his heels to the inn with a copious volley of stones and mud. To disperse the mob which had collected before my uncle's house, my mother was obliged to shew herself at the window, and to declare publicly, that she was thoroughly satisfied with my proceedings. Another detachment had filed off to the stable-yard where my carriage stood, in the full determination of breaking it to pieces; and this they would inevitably have done, if the landlord and lady had not found some means of quieting their perturbed spirits, and turning them aside from their outrageous purpose.

All these affronts, so revolting to my dignity, the effect of the tales which the young grocer had been spreading about town, inspired me with such a thorough hatred for my native place, that I determined on quitting Oviedo almost immediately, though but for this bustle I might have made it my residence for some time. I announced my intention, with the reasons of it, to my mother, who, considering my uncouth reception as no very flattering compliment to herself, did not urge my longer stay among

people so little inclined to treat me civilly. The only point remaining now to be discussed was her future destiny and provision. My dear mother, said I, since my uncle stands so much in need of your attendance, I will no longer urge you to go along with me; but, as his days seem likely to be very few on earth, you must promise to come and take up your abode with me at my farm, as soon as the last duties are performed to his honoured remains.

I shall make no such promise, answered my mother, for I mean to pass the remnant of my days in the Asturias, and in a state of perfect independence. Will you not on all occasions, replied I, be absolute mistress in my household? May be so, and may be not! rejoined she: you have only to fall in love with some flirt of a girl, and then you will marry: then she will be my daughter-in-law, and I shall be her stepmother; and then we shall live together as stepmothers and daughters-in-law usually do. Your prognostics, said I, are fetched from a great distance. I have not at present the most remote intention of entering into the happy state: but even though such a whim should take possession of my brain, I will pledge myself for instructing my wife betimes in an implicit submission to your will and pleasure. That is giving security, without the means of making good your contract, replied my mother: you would scarcely be able to justify bail. I would not even swear that in our sparring-matches, you might not take your wife's part in preference to mine, however ill she might behave, or however unreasonably she might argue.

You talk very excellent sense, madam, cried my secretary, coming in for his share of the conversation: I think just as you do, that docility is about as much the virtue of a donkey as of a daughter-in-law. As the matter stands, that there may be no difference of opinion between my master and you, since you are absolutely determined to live asunder, you in the Asturias, and he in the kingdom of Valencia, he must allow you an annuity of a hundred pistoles, and send me hither every year for the payment. By thus arranging matters, mother and son will be very good friends, with an interval of two hundred leagues between them. The parties concerned fell in at once with the proposal: I paid the first year in advance,

nd stole out of Oviedo the next morning before dawn, or fear of vying with Saint Stephen in popular favour. uch were the charms of my return to my native place. n admirable lesson this for those successful upstarts, who aving gone abroad to make their fortunes, come home be the purse-proud tyrants of their birth-place.

CHAPTER III

IL BLAS SETS OUT FOR VALENCIA, AND ARRIVES AT LIRIAS; DESCRIPTION OF HIS SEAT; THE PARTICULARS OF HIS RECEPTION, AND THE CHARACTERS OF THE INHABITANTS HE FOUND THERE

WE took the road for Leon, afterwards that of Palencia; nd, continuing our journey by short stages, arrived on the vening of the tenth day at the town of Segorba, whence early n the morrow we repaired to my seat, at the distance f very little more than three leagues. In proportion as we pproached nearer, it was amusing to see with what a long- ng eye my secretary looked at all the estates which lay in ur way, to the right and left of the road. Whenever he aught a glimpse of any which bespoke the rank and opu- nce of its owner, he never missed pointing at it with his nger, and wishing that were the place of our retreat.

I know not, my good friend, said I, what idea you have rmed of our habitation; but if you have taken it into your ead that ours is a magnificent house, with the domain of a reat landed proprietor, I warn you in time that you are ying much too flattering an unction to your vanity.

If you have no mind to be the dupe of a warm imagina- on, figure to yourself the little ornamented cottage which orace fitted up near Tibur in the country of the Sabines, n a small farm, the fee-simple of which was given him y Mæcenas. Don Alphonso has made me just such nother present, more as a token of affection than for the alue of the thing. Then I must expect to see nothing but dirty hovel! exclaimed Scipio. Bear in mind, replied I, nat I have always given you quite an unvarnished descrip- on of my place; and now, even at this moment, you may dge for yourself whether I have not stuck to truth and

nature in my representations. · Just carry your eye along the course of the Guadalaviar, and observe at a little distance from the further bank, near that hamlet, consisting of nine or ten tenements, a house with four small turrets; that is my mansion.

The deuce and all! stammered out my secretary, short-breathed with sudden admiration: why, that house is one of the prettiest things in nature. Besides the castellated air which those turrets give it, all the beauties of situation and architecture, fertility of soil, and perfection of landscape, combine to rival or excel the immediate neighbourhood of Seville, complimented as it is for its picturesque attractions by the appellation of an earthly paradise. Had we chosen the place of our settlement for ourselves, it could not have been more to my taste: a river meanders through the grounds, distilling plenty and verdure from its fertilizing bosom; the leafy honours of an umbrageous wood invite the mid-day walk, and qualify the temperature of the seasons. What a heavenly abode of solitude and contemplation! Ah! my dear master, we shall act very foolishly if we are in a hurry to run away from our happiness. I am delighted, answered I, that you are so well satisfied with the retreat provided for us, though yet acquainted with only a small part of its attractions.

As we were chatting in this strain, we got nearer and nearer to the house, where the door opened, as by magic, the moment Scipio announced Signor Gil Blas de Santillane, who was coming to take possession of his estate. At the mention of this name, received with reverential homage by the people who had been instructed in the transfer of their obedience, my carriage was admitted into a large court, where I alighted; then leaning with all my weight upon Scipio, as if walking was a derogation from my dignity, and putting on the great man after the most consequential models, I reached the hall, where, on my entrance, seven or eight servants made their obeisances. They told me they were come to welcome their new master with their best loves and duties: that Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso de Leyva had chosen them to form my establishment, one in quality of cook, another as under-cook, a third as scullion, a fourth as porter, and the rest as footmen; with an express injunction to receive no wages or perquisites, as

those two noblemen meant to defray all the expenses of my household. The cook, Master Joachim by name, was commander-in-chief of this battalion, and announced to me the whole array of the campaign; he declared that he had laid in a large stock of the choicest wines in Spain, and insinuated that for the solid supply of the table, he flattered himself a person of his education and experience, who had been six years at the head of my Lord Archbishop of Valencia's kitchen, must know how to dish up a dinner so as to meet the ideas of the most fastidious layman in Christendom. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating, added he; so I will just go and give you a specimen of my talent. You had better take a walk, my lord, while dinner is getting ready: look about the premises; and see whether you find them in tenantable condition for a person of your lordship's dignity.

The reader may guess whether I did not stir my stumps; and Scipio, still more eager than myself to take a bird's eye inventory of our goods and chattels, dragged me back and fore from room to room. There was not a corner of the house that we did not peep into, from the garret to the cellar: not a closet or a cranny, at least as we supposed, could escape our prying curiosity; and in every fresh room we went into, I had occasion to admire the kindness of Don Cæsar and his son towards me. I was struck, among other things, with two apartments, which were as elegantly furnished as they could be, without misplaced magnificence. One of them was hung with tapestry, the celebrated manufacture of the Low Countries; the velvet bed and chairs were still very handsome, though in the fashion of the time when the Moors possessed the kingdom of Valencia. The furniture of the other room was in the same taste; to wit, an old suit of hangings, made of yellow Genoa damask, with a bed and arm-chairs to match, fringed with blue silk. All these effects, which would have furnished but a sorry display in an upholsterer's shop, made no contemptible appearance in their present situation.

After having rummaged over every article of the paraphernalia, my secretary and myself returned to the dining-room, where the cloth was laid for two; we sat down; and in an instant they served up so delicious an olla podrida, that we could not help revolving on the various turns of the fate

below which had parted the good Archbishop of Valencia from his cook. We had in truth a most catholic and ravenous appetite; a circumstance which added new zest to our praises and enjoyments. Between every succeeding help my servants, with all the alacrity of fresh and holiday service, filled our large glasses to the brim with wine, the choicest vintage of La Mancha. Scipio, not thinking it genteel to express aloud the inward chucklings of his heart at our dainty fare, winked and nodded his delight, and spoke by signs, which I returned with the like dumb eloquence of overflowing satisfaction. The remove was a dish of roast quails, flanking a little leveret in high order, just kept long enough; for this we left our hash, good as it was, and gorged ourselves to a surfeit on the game. When we had eaten as if we had never eaten before, and pledged one another in due proportion, we rose from table and went into the garden to look out for some cool, pleasant spot, and take our afternoon's nap voluptuously.

If hitherto my secretary had goggled satisfaction at what he had seen, he stared wider and grinned broader at this vista vision of the garden. He scarcely allowed the comparison to be in favour of the Escurial. The reason of its extreme niceness was that Don Cæsar, who came backwards and forwards to Lirias, took pleasure in improving and ornamenting it. All the walks well gravelled and lined with orange trees, a large reservoir of white marble, with a lion in bronze spouting water like a dolphin's deputy in the middle, the beauty of the flower borders, the profusion and variety of the fruit trees; such pretty particulars as these made Scipio smack his lips and snuff the air; but his raptures reached their summit at the gradual descent of a long walk, leading to the bailiff's cottage, and overarched by the interwoven boughs of the trees planted on each side. While eulogizing a place so well adapted for a refuge from the intenseness of the heat, we made a halt, and sat down at the foot of an elm, where sleep required very little cunning to entangle two high-fed, half-tipsy blades, just risen from so voluptuous and voracious a repast.

In about two hours we were startled out of our sleep by the report of musketry, popping so near the headquarters of our repose that we apprehended the camp to be attacked. On the alert! was the first idea that invaded

our dozing minds. That we might procure the most authentic intelligence, in what direction the enemy was approaching, we directed our march towards the bailiff's tenement. There were collected eight or ten clodhoppers, all friends and neighbours, assembled on the green for the purpose of honouring my arrival, just communicated to the vacant senses of the said clodhoppers, by a discharge of fire-arms, whose barrels and furniture might thank me for the unusual favour of a thorough cleaning. The greater part of them were acquainted with my person, having seen me more than once at the castle, while engaged in the business of my stewardship. No sooner did they set eyes on me, than they all shouted in unison: Long life to our new lord and master! welcome to Lirias! Then they loaded once again, and fired another volley in honour of the occasion. My habits and manners were softened down to the most condescending urbanity, though with a decorous infusion of distance, lest any degrading constructions might be put upon too unlimited a freedom of address. With respect to my protection, I promised it according to the customary charter of newly-installed possessors; and went so far as to throw them a purse of twenty pistoles: and this, in my opinion, was the point of all others in my conduct which touched their hearts most nearly. After this benefaction, I left them at liberty to waste as much powder as they pleased, and withdrew with my secretary into the wood, where we walked to and fro till night-fall, without being at all tired of our rural prospect: so many charms had the view of a landscape, heightened by the substantial duties of ownership in fee-simple, to our elevated and delighted imaginations.

The cook, the under-cook, and the scullion were not resting upon their oars all this time: they were working hard to fit up for us an artifice of belly timber more magnificent than what we had already demolished; so that we were over head and ears in amazement, when on our return to the room where we had dined, we saw on the table a dish of four roast partridges, with a smothered rabbit on one side, and a fricasseed capon on the other. The second course consisted of pigs' ears, jugged game, and chocolate cream. We drank deeply of the most

delicious wines, and began to think of going to bed, when it became a matter of doubt whether we could sit up any longer. Then my people, with lighted candles before me, led the way to the best bed-room, where they were all most officious in assisting to undress me: but when they had tendered me my gown and nightcap, I dismissed them with an authoritative undulation of my hand, signifying that their services were dispensed with for the remainder of that night.

Thus I sent them all about their business, keeping Scipio for a little private conference between ourselves; and I led to it by asking him what he thought of my reception, as arranged by order of my noble patrons. Indeed and indeed, answered he, the human heart could not devise anything more delicious; I only wish we may go on as we have begun. I have no wish of the kind, replied I: it is contrary to my principles to allow that my benefactors should put themselves to so much expense on my account; it would be a downright fraud upon their benevolence. Besides, I could never feel myself at home with servants in the pay of other people; it is just like living in a lodging or an inn. Then it is to be remembered, that I did not come hither to live upon so expensive a scale. What occasion have we for so large an establishment of servants? Our utmost want, with Bertrand, is a cook, a scullion, and a footman. Though my secretary would not have been at all sorry to table for a continuance at the governor of Valencia's expense, he did not oppose his own luxurious taste to my moral delicacy, but conformed at once to my sentiments, and approved the reduction I was meditating to introduce. That point being decided, he left my chamber, and betook himself to his pillow in his own.

CHAPTER IV

A JOURNEY TO VALENCIA, AND A VISIT TO THE LORDS OF LEYVA. THE CONVERSATION OF THE GENTLEMEN, AND SERAPHINA'S DEMEANOUR

I GOT my clothes off as soon as possible, and went to bed, where, finding no great inclination to sleep, I com-

muned with my own thoughts. The mutual attachment between the lords of Leyva and myself was uppermost in the various topics of my contemplation. With my heart full of their late kindness, I determined on setting out for their residence the next day, and quenching my impatience to thank them for their favours. Neither was it a slender gratification to anticipate another interview with Serafina; though there was somewhat of alloy in that pleasure: it was impossible to reflect without shuddering, that I should at the same time have to encounter the glances of Dame Lorenza Sephora, who might not be greatly delighted at the renewal of our acquaintance, should her memory happen to stumble upon the circumstances connected with a certain box on the ear. With my mind exhausted by all these different suggestions, my eyelids at length closed, and the sun had peeped in at my window long before they turned upon their hinges.

I was soon out of bed; and dressed myself with all possible expedition, in the earnest desire of prosecuting my intended journey. Just as I had finished my hasty operations, my secretary came into the room. Scipio, said I, you behold a man on the point of setting out for Valencia. I ought to lose no time in paying my respects to those noblemen to whom I am indebted for my little independence. Every moment of delay in the performance of this duty throws a new weight of ingratitude on my conscience. As for you, my friend, there is no necessity for your attendance; stay here during my absence; I shall come back to you within the space of a week. Heaven speed you, sir! answered he—be sure you do not slight Don Alphonso and his father—they seem to me to thrill with the kindly vibrations of friendship, and to be unbounded in the acknowledgment of obligation: gratitude and benevolence are so uncommon in people of rank, that they deserve to be made the most of where found. I sent a message to Berrand, to hold himself in readiness for setting out, and took my chocolate while he was harnessing the mules. When all was prepared, I got into my carriage, after having directed my people to consider my secretary as master of the house in my absence, and to obey his orders as if they were my own.

I got to Valencia in less than four hours, and drove at

once to the governor's stables, where I alighted and left my equipage. On going to the house, I was informed that Don Cæsar and his son were together. I did not wait for an introduction, but went in without ceremony; and addressing myself to both of them, Servants, said I, never send in their names to their masters; here is an old piece of family furniture, not ornamental indeed, but of a fashion when gratitude was neither out of date nor out of countenance. These words were accompanied with an effort to throw myself on my knees; but they anticipated my purpose, and embraced me one after the other with all possible evidence of sincere affection. Well, then, my dear Santillane, said Don Alphonso, you have been at Lirias to take possession of your little property. Yes, my lord, answered I; and my next request is, that you would be pleased to take it back again. What is your reason for that? replied he. Is there anything about it at all offensive to your taste? Not in the place itself, rejoined I: on the contrary, that is everything that my heart can wish; the only fault I have to find with it is, that the kitchen smells too strongly of the hierarchy; a lay Christian should not live like an archbishop; besides that, there are three times as many servants as are necessary, and consequently you are put to an expense at once enormous and useless.

Had you accepted the annuity of two thousand ducats which we offered you at Madrid, said Don Cæsar, we should have thought it enough to give you the mansion furnished as it is: but you know, you refused it; and we felt it but right to do what we have done as an equivalent. Your bounty has been too lavish, answered I: the gift of the estate was the utmost limit to which it should have been extended, and that was more than sufficient to crown my largest wishes. But to say nothing about what it has cost you to keep up so great and expensive an establishment, I declare to you most solemnly that these people stand in my way, and are a great annoyance. In one word, gentlemen, either take back your boon, or give me leave to enjoy it in my own way. I pronounced these last words so much as if I was in earnest, that the father and son, not meaning to lay me under any unpleasant restraint, at length gave me their permission to manage my household as it should seem expedient to my better judgment.

I was thanking them very kindly for having granted me that privilege, without which a dukedom would have been but splendid slavery, when Don Alphonso interrupted me by saying: My dear Gil Blas, I will introduce you to a lady who will be extremely happy to see you. Thus preparing me for the interview, he took me by the hand and led the way to Seraphina's apartment, who set up a scream of joy on recognizing me. Madam, said the governor, I flatter myself that the visit of our friend Santillane at Valencia is not less acceptable to you than myself. On that head, answered she, he may rest confidently assured; time has not obliterated the remembrance of the service which he once rendered me, and to that must be added a new debt of gratitude incurred on the score of your obligations. I told the governor's lady that I was already too well requited for the danger which I had shared in common with her deliverers, in exposing my life for her sake: compliments to the like effect were bandied about for some time on both sides, when Don Alphonso motioned to quit Seraphina's room. We then went back to Don Cæsar, whom we found in the saloon with a fashionable party, who were come to dinner.

All these gentlemen were introduced, and paid their compliments to me in the politest manner; nor did their attentions relax in assiduity, when Don Cæsar told them that I had been one of the Duke of Lerma's principal secretaries. In all likelihood several of them might not be unacquainted that Don Alphonso had been promoted to the government of Valencia by my interest, for political secrets are seldom kept. However that might be, while we were at table, the conversation principally turned on the new cardinal. Some of the company either were, or affected to be, his unqualified admirers, while others allowed his merit upon the whole, but thought it had been rather overrated. I plainly saw through their design of drawing me on to enlarge on the subject of his eminence, and to gratify their taste for scandal with court anecdotes at his expense. I could have been well enough pleased to have delivered my real sentiments on his character, but I kept my tongue within my teeth, and thereby passed in the estimation of the guests for a close, confidential, politic, trustworthy young statesman.

The party respectively retired home after dinner to take their usual nap, when Don Cæsar and his son, yielding to a similar inclination, shut themselves up in their apartments.

For my own part, full of impatience to see a town which I had so often heard extolled for its beauty, I went out of the governor's palace with the intention of walking through the streets. At the gate a man accosted me with the following address: Will Signor de Santillane allow me to take the liberty of paying my respects to him? I asked him who and what he was. I am Don Cæsar's valet-de-chambre, answered he, but was one of his ordinary footmen during your stewardship; I used to make my court to you every morning, and you used to take a great deal of notice of me. I regularly gave you intelligence of what was passing in the house. Do you recollect my apprising you one day that the village surgeon of Leyva was privately admitted into Dame Lorenza Sephora's bedchamber? It is a circumstance which I have by no means forgotten, replied I. But now that we are talking of that formidable duenna, what is become of her? Alas! resumed he, the poor creature moped and dwindled after your departure, and at length gave up the ghost, more to the grief of Seraphina than of Don Alphonso, who seemed to consider her death as no great evil.

Don Cæsar's valet-de-chambre, having thus acquainted me with Sephora's melancholy end, made an humble apology for having presumed to stop my walk, and then left me to continue my progress. I could not help paying the tribute of a sigh to the memory of that ill-fated duenna; and her decease affected me the more, because I taxed myself with that melancholy catastrophe, though a moment's reflection would have convinced me, that the grave owed its precious prey to the inroads of her cancer rather than to the cruel charms of my person.

I looked with an eye of pleasure upon everything worth notice in the town. The archbishop's marble palace feasted my eyes with all the magnificence of architecture; nor were the piazzas which surrounded the exchange much inferior in commercial grandeur; but a large building at a distance, with a great crowd standing before the doors, attracted all my attention. I went nearer, to ascertain

the reason why so great a concourse of both sexes was collected, and was soon let into the secret by reading the following inscription in letters of gold on a tablet of black marble over the door: *La Posada de los Representantes.** The play-bills announced for that day a new tragedy, never performed, and gave the name of Don Gabriel Triaquero as the author.

CHAPTER V

GIL BLAS GOES TO THE PLAY, AND SEES A NEW TRAGEDY. THE SUCCESS OF THE PIECE. THE PUBLIC TASTE AT VALENCIA

I STOPPED for some minutes before the door, to make my remarks on the people who were going in. There were some of all sorts and sizes. Here was a knot of genteel-looking fellows, whose tailors at least had done justice to their fashionable pretensions; there a mob of ill-favoured and ill-mannered mortals, in a garb to identify vulgarity. To the right was a bevy of noble ladies, alighting from their carriages to take possession of their private boxes; to the left a tribe of female traders in lubricity, who came to sell their wares in the lobby. This mixed concourse of spectators, as various in their minds as in their faces, gave me an itching inclination to increase their number. Just as I was taking my check, the governor and his lady drove up. They spied me out in the crowd, and having sent for me, took me with them to their box, where I placed myself behind them, in such a position as to converse at my ease with either.

The theatre was filled with spectators from the ceiling downwards, the pit thronged almost to suffocation, and the stage crowded with knights of the three military orders. Here is a full house! said I to Don Alphonso. You are not to consider that as anything extraordinary, answered he; the tragedy now about to be produced is from the pen of Don Gabriel Triaquero, the most fashionable dramatic writer of his day. Whenever the play-bill announces any novelty from this favourite author, the whole town of Valencia is in a bustle. The men as well as the women talk incessantly on the subject of the piece: all the boxes

* The Theatre

are taken; and, on the first night of performance, there is a risk of broken limbs in getting in, though the price of admission is doubled, with the exception of the pit, which is too authoritative a part of the house for the proprietors to tamper with its patience. What a paroxysm of partiality! said I to the governor. This eager curiosity of the public, this hot-headed impatience to be present at the first representation of Don Gabriel's pieces, gives me a magnificent idea of that poet's genius.

At this period of our conversation the curtain rose. We immediately left off talking, to fix our whole attention on the stage. The applauses were rapturous even at the prologue: as the performance advanced, every sentiment and situation, nay, almost every line of the piece called forth a burst of acclamation; and at the end of each act the clapping of hands was so loud and incessant, as almost to bring the building about our ears. After the dropping of the curtain, the author was pointed out to me, going about from box to box, and with all the modesty of a successful poet, submitting his head to the imposition of those laurels, which the genteeler, and especially the fairer part of the audience had prepared for his coronation.

We returned to the governor's palace, where we were met by a party of three or four gentlemen. Besides these mere amateurs, there were two veteran authors of considerable eminence in their line, and a gentleman of Madrid with tolerably fair claims to critical authority and judgment. They had all been at the play. The new piece was the only topic of conversation during supper-time. Gentlemen, said a knight of St James, what do you think of this tragedy? Has it not every claim to the character of a finished work? Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn, a hand to touch the true chords of pity, and sweep the lyre of poetry; requisites how rarely, and yet how admirably united! In a word, it is the performance of a person mixing in the higher circles of society. There can be no possible difference of opinion on that subject, said a knight of Alcantara. The piece is full of strokes which Apollo himself might have aimed, and of perplexities contrived so that none but the author himself could have unravelled them. I appeal to that acute and ingenious stranger, added he, addressing his discourse to the Cas-

itilian gentleman; he looks to me like a good judge, and I will lay a wager that he is on my side of the question. Take care how you stake on an uncertainty, my worthy knight, answered the gentleman with a sarcastic smile. I am not of your provincial school; we do not pass our judgment so hastily at Madrid. Far from sentencing a piece on its first representation, we are jealous of its apparent merit while aided by scenic deception; our fancies and our feelings may be carried away for the moment, but our serious decision is suspended till we have read the work; and the most common result of its appeal to the press is a defalcation from its powers of pleasing on the stage.

Thus you perceive, pursued he, that it is our practice to examine a work of genius closely before we stamp on it the mark of a stock piece: it's author's fame, let it ring as loudly as it may, can never confound our exactness of discrimination. When Lope de Vega himself or Calderona ventured on the boards, they encountered rigid critics, though in an audience which doted on them: critics who would not sign their passport to the regions of immortality till they had sifted their claims to be admitted there.

That is a little too much, interrupted the knight of St James. We are not quite so cautious as you. It is not our custom to wait for the printing of a piece in order to decide on its reputation. By the very first performance it sinks or swims. It does not even seem necessary to be inconveniently attentive to the business of the stage. It is sufficient that we know it for a production of Don Gabriel, to be persuaded that it combines every excellence. The works of that poet may justly be considered as commencing a new era, and fixing the criterion of good taste. The school of Lope and Calderona was the mere cart of Thespis, compared with the polished scenes of this great dramatic master. The gentleman, who looked up to Lope and Calderona as the Sophocles and Euripides of the Spaniards, could not easily be brought to acknowledge such wild canons of criticism. This is dramatic heresy with a vengeance! exclaimed he. Since you compel me, gentlemen, to decide like you on the fallacious evidence of a first night, I must tell you that I am not at all satisfied with this new tragedy of your Don Gabriel. As a poem it abounds more with glittering conceits than with passages

of pathos or delineations of nature. The verses, three out of four, are defective either in measure or rhyme; the characters, clumsily imagined or incongruously supported; and the thoughts have often the obscurity of a riddle without its ingenuity.

The two authors at table, who, with a prudence equally commendable and unusual, had said nothing for fear of lying under the imputation of jealousy, could not help assenting to the last speaker's opinions by their looks; which warranted me in concluding that their silence was less owing to the perfection of the work than to the dictates of personal policy. As for the military critics, they got to their old topic of ringing the changes on Don Gabriel, and exalted him to a level with the under-tenants of Olympus. This extravagant association with the demigods, this blind and stiff-necked idolatry, divorced the Castilian from his little stock of patience, so that, raising his hands to heaven, he broke out abruptly into a volley of enthusiasm: O divine Lope de Vega, sublime and unrivalled genius, who has left an immeasurable space between thee and all the Gabriels who would light their tapers from thy bright effulgence! and thou, mellow, soft-voiced Calderona, whose elegance and sweetness, rejecting buskined rant and tragic swell, reign with undisputed sway over the affections, fear not, either of you, lest your altars should be overturned by this tongue-tied nursling of the muses! It will be the utmost of his renown, if posterity, before whose eyes your works shall live in daily view, and form their dear delight, shall enrol his name, as matter of history and curious record, on the list of obsolete authors.

This animated apostrophe, for which the company was not at all prepared, raised a hearty laugh, after which we all rose from the table and withdrew. An apartment had been got ready for me by Don Alphonso's order, where I found a good bed; and my lordship, lying down in luxurious weariness, went to sleep upon the tag of the Castilian gentleman's impassioned vindication, and dreamed most crustily of the injustice done to Lope and Calderona by ignorant pretenders.

CHAPTER VI

GIL BLAS, WALKING ABOUT THE STREETS OF VALENCIA, MEETS WITH A MAN OF SANCTITY, WHOSE PIOUS FACE HE HAS SEEN SOMEWHERE ELSE. WHAT SORT OF MAN THIS MAN OF SANCTITY TURNS OUT TO BE

As I had not been able to complete my view of the city on the preceding day, I got up betimes in the morning with the intention of taking another walk. In the street I remarked a Carthusian friar, who doubtless was thus early in motion to promote the interests of his order. He walked with his eyes fixed on the ground, and a gait so holy and contemplative, as to inspire every passenger with religious awe. His path was in the same direction as mine. I looked at him with more than ordinary curiosity, and could not help fancying it was Don Raphael, that man of shifts and expedients, who has already secured so honourable a niche in the temple of fame. (*See Books I. to VI. of my Memoirs.*)

I was so utterly astonished, so thrown off my balance by this meeting, that instead of accosting the monk, I remained motionless for some seconds, which gave him time to get the start of me. Just heaven! said I, were there ever two faces more exactly alike? I do not know what to make of it! It seems incredible that Raphael should turn up in such a guise! And yet how is it possible to be any one else? I felt too great a curiosity to get at the truth not to pursue the inquiry. Having ascertained the way to the monastery of the Carthusians, I repaired thither immediately, in the hope of coming across the object of my search on his return, and with the full intent of stopping and parleying with him. But it was quite unnecessary to wait for his arrival to enlighten my mind on the subject: on reaching the convent gate, another physiognomy, such as few persons had read without paying for their lesson, resolved all my doubts into certainty; for the friar who served in the capacity of porter was unquestionably my old and godly-visaged servant, Ambrose de Lamela.

Our surprise was equal on both sides at meeting again in such a place. Is not this a play upon the senses? said I,

paying my compliments to him. Is it actually one of my friends who presents himself to my astonished sight? He did not know me again at first, or probably might pretend not to do so; but reflecting within himself that it was in vain to deny his own identity, he assumed the start of a man who all at once hits upon a circumstance which had hitherto escaped his recollection. Ah, Signor Gil Blas! exclaimed he, excuse my not recognizing your person immediately. Since I have lived in this holy place, every faculty of my soul has been absorbed in the performance of the duties prescribed by our rules, so that by degrees I lose the remembrance of all worldly objects and events.

After a separation of ten years, said I, it gives me much pleasure to find you again in so venerable a garb. For my part, answered he, it fills me with shame and confusion to appear in it before a man who has been an eye-witness of my guilty courses. These ghostly weeds are at once the charm of my present life, and the condemnation of my former. Alas! added he, heaving a righteous sigh, to be worthy of wearing it, my earlier years should have been passed in primitive innocence. By this discourse, so rational and edifying, replied I, it is plain, my dear brother, that the finger of the Lord has been upon you, that you are marked out for a vessel of sanctification. I tell you once again, I am delighted at it, and would give the world to know in what miraculous manner you and Raphael were led into the path of the righteous; for I am persuaded that it was his own self whom I met in the town, habited as a Carthusian. I was extremely sorry afterwards not to have stopped and spoken to him in the street; and I am waiting here to apologize for my neglect on his return.

You were not mistaken, said Lamela, it was Don Raphael himself whom you saw; and as for the particulars of our conversion, they are as follow: After parting with you near Segorba, we struck into the Valencia road, with the design of bettering our trade by some new speculation. Chance or destiny one day led our steps into the church of the Carthusians, while service was performing in the choir. The demeanour of the brethren attracted our notice, and we experienced in our own persons the involuntary homage which vice pays to virtue. We admired the fervour with which they poured forth their devotions,

their looks of pious mortification, their deadness to the pleasures of the world and the flesh, and in the settled composure of their countenances, the outward sign of an approving conscience within.

While making these observations, we fell into a train of thought which became like manna to the hungry and thirsty soul: we compared our habits of life with the employments of these holy men, and the wide difference between our spiritual conditions filled us with confusion and affright. Lamela, said Don Raphael, as we went out of church, how do you stand affected by what we have just seen? For my part, there is no disguising the truth, my mind is ill at ease. Emotions, new and indescribable, are rushing upon my mind: and, for the first time in my life, I reproach myself with the wickedness of my past actions. I am just in the same temper of soul, answered I; my iniquities are all drawn up in array against me, they beset me, they stare me in the face; my heart, hitherto proof against all the arrows of remorse, is at this moment shot through, torn and disfigured, tormented and destroyed. Ah! my dear Ambrose, resumed my partner, we are two stray sheep, whom our Heavenly Father, in mercy, would lead back gently to the fold. It is he himself, my child, it is he who warms and guides us. Let us not be deaf to the call of his voice; let us abandon all our wicked courses, let us begin from this day to work out our salvation with diligence and in the spirit of repentance: we had better spend the remainder of our days in this convent, and consecrate them to penitence and devotion.

I applauded Raphael's sentiment, continued brother Ambrose; and we formed the glorious resolution of becoming Carthusians. To carry it into effect, we applied to the venerable prior, who was no sooner made acquainted with our purpose, than to ascertain whether our call was from the world above or the world beneath, he appointed us to cells, and all the strictness of monkish discipline, for a whole year. We acted up to the rules with equal regularity and fortitude, and, by way of reward, were admitted among the novices. Our condition was so much what we wished it, and our hearts were so full of religious zeal, that we underwent the toils of our noviciate with unflinching courage. When that was over, we professed; after which, Don Raphael,

appearing admirably well qualified, both by natural talent and various experience, for the management of secular concerns, was chosen assistant to an old friar who was at that time proctor. The son of Lucinda would infinitely have preferred dedicating every remaining moment of his existence to prayer; but he found it necessary to sacrifice his taste for devotion, in furtherance of the general prosperity. He entered with so much zeal and knowledge into the interests of the house, that he was considered as the most eligible person to succeed the old proctor, who died three years afterwards. Don Raphael accordingly fills that office at present; and it may be truly said that he discharges his duty to the entire satisfaction of all our fathers, who praise in the highest terms his conduct in the administration of our temporalities. What is most of all miraculous, and shews the hand of heaven in his conversion, is that, with such an accumulation of business rushing in upon him in his bursarial department, his regards are inalienably fixed on the world to come. When business leaves him but a moment to recruit nature, instead of lavishing the short period in indulgence, his thoughts wing their way into the regions of devout and holy meditation. In short, he is the most exemplary member of this body.

At this period of our conversation I interrupted Lamela by an ebullition of joy to which I gave vent at the sight of Raphael coming in. Here he is! exclaimed I: behold that righteous bursar for whom I have been so impatiently waiting. With a leap and a bound did I run to meet and embrace him. He submitted to the hug with his newly-acquired resignation; and, without betraying the slightest shock at meeting with an old companion of his profaner hours, his words were dictated by the spirit of gentleness and humility: The powers above be praised, Signor de Santillane, the powers be praised for this kind providence whereby we meet again. In good truth, my dear Raphael, replied I, your happy destiny pleases me as much as if it had been my own good luck; brother Ambrose has told me the whole story of your conversion, and the tale almost moved me to a similar change. What a glorious lot for you two, my friends, when you have reason to flatter yourselves with being among that picked number of the

elect, who have eternal happiness thrust upon them whether they will or no!

Two miserable sinners like ourselves, resumed the son of Lucinda, with an air which marked the extreme of sanctified morality, must not hope that our own merits are of weight enough to save our souls; but even the wicked one who repenteth, findeth grace with the Father of mercies. And you, Signor Gil Blas, added he, is it not time to lay in a claim for pardon of the offences which you have committed? What is your business here in Valencia? Are you not hankering after some office of devil's deputy, and making shipwreck of your voyage to another world? Not so, by the blessing of heaven, answered I; since I turned my back on the court, I have led a very moral sort of life: sometimes enjoying rural recreations on an estate of mine at a few leagues distance from this town, and sometimes coming hither to pass my time with my friend the governor, whom you both of you must know perfectly well.

On this cue I related to them the story of Don Alphonso de Leyva. They heard the particulars with attention; and on my telling them that I had carried to Samuel Simon, on the part of that nobleman, the three thousand ducats of which we had robbed him, Lamela interrupted the thread of my narrative, and addressing his discourse to Raphael, said: Father Hilary, if this be true, the honest vender of wares has no reason to quarrel with a robbery which has paid him fifty per cent.; and our consciences, as far as that indictment goes, may bask in the sunshine of acquitted innocence. Brother Ambrose and I, said the bursar, did actually, on the assumption of the habit, send Samuel Simon fifteen hundred ducats privately, by a pious ecclesiastic who made a pilgrimage to Xelva for the sole purpose of accomplishing this restitution; but it will go hard with Samuel at the general reckoning, if he for filthy lucre could soil his fingers with that sum, after having been reimbursed in full by Signor de Santillane. But, said I, how do you know that your fifteen hundred ducats were faithfully paid into his hands? Unquestionably they were! exclaimed Don Raphael; I would answer for the disinterested purity of that ecclesiastic as soon as for my own. I would be your collateral security, said Lamela; he is a priest of the strictest sanctity, a sort of universal almoner;

and though many times cited for sums of money, deposited with him for charitable uses, he has always non-suited the plaintiffs, and gone out of court with an augmentation of alms-giving notoriety.

Our conversation continued for some time longer: at length we parted, with many a pious exhortation on their side, always to have the fear of the Lord before my eyes, and with many an earnest intreaty on mine, that they would remember me constantly in their prayers. Don Alphonso was now the first object of my search. You will never guess, said I, with whom I have just had a long conference. I am but now come from two venerable Carthusians of your acquaintance; the name of the one is father Hilary, that of the other, brother Ambrose. You are mistaken, answered Don Alphonso; I am not acquainted with a single Carthusian. Pardon me, replied I; you have seen brother Ambrose at Xelva in the capacity of commissary, and father Hilary as register to the Inquisition. Oh heaven! exclaimed the governor with surprise, can it be within the bounds of possibility that Raphael and Lamela should have turned Carthusians? It is even so, answered I; they professed several years ago. The former is bursar and proctor to the convent; the latter, porter.

The son of Don Cæsar rubbed his forehead twice or thrice, then shaking his head, These worshipful officers of the Inquisition, said he, most assuredly purpose playing over the old farce on a new stage here. You judge of them by prejudice, answered I, from the impression of their characters as men of sin: but had you been edified by their lectures as I have been, you would think more favourably of their holiness. To be true, it is not for mortal men to fathom the depth of other men's hearts; but to all appearance they are two prodigals returned home. It possibly may be so, replied Don Alphonso: there are many instances of libertines, who hide their heads in cloisters, after having scandalized human nature by their obliquities, to expiate their offences by a severe penance: I heartily wish that our two monks may be such libertines restored.

Well! and why not? said I. They have embraced the monastic life of their own accord, and have squared their conduct for a length of time according to the maxims of their order. You may say what you please, retorted the

governor; but I do not like the convent's rents being received by this father Hilary, of whom I cannot help entertaining a very untoward opinion. When the fine story he told us of his adventures comes across my mind, I tremble for the reverend brotherhood. I am willing to believe with you, that he has taken the vow with the pious intention of keeping it; but the blaze of gold may be too much for the weakness of his regenerated eye-sight. It is bad policy to lock up a reformed drunkard in a wine cellar.

In the course of a few days Don Alphonso's misgivings were fully justified; these two official props and stays of the establishment ran away with the year's revenue. This news, which was immediately noised about the town, could not do otherwise than set the tongues of the wits in motion; for they always make themselves merry at the crosses and losses of the well-endowed religious orders. As for the governor and myself, we condoled with the Carthusians, but kept our acquaintance with the apostate pilferers in the background.

CHAPTER VII

GIL BLAS RETURNS TO HIS SEAT AT LIRIAS. SCIPIO'S AGREEABLE INTELLIGENCE, AND A REFORM IN THE DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS

I PASSED a week at Valencia in the first company, living on equal terms with the best of the nobility. Plays, balls, concerts, grand dinners, ladies' parties, all things that heart could wish or vanity grow tall upon, were provided for me by the governor and his lady, to whom I paid my court so dexterously, that they were heartily sorry to see me set out on my return to Lirias. They even obliged me, before they would let me go, to engage for a division of my time between them and my hermitage. It was determined that I should spend the winter in Valencia, and the summer at my seat. After this bargain, my benefactors left me at liberty to tear myself from them, and go where their kindness would be always staring me in the face.

Scipio, who was waiting impatiently for my return, was ready to jump out of his skin for joy at the sight of me; and his ecstacies were doubled at my circumstantial account

of the journey. And now for your history, my friend, said I, taking breath: to what moral uses have you turned the solitary period of my absence? Has the time passed agreeably? As well, answered he, as it could with a servant to whom nothing is so dear as the presence of his master. I have walked over our little domain, circuitously and diagonally: sometimes seated on the margin of a fountain in our wood, I have taken pleasure in beholding the transparency of its waters, which are as pellucid as those of the sacred spring, whose projection from the rock made the vast forest of Albunea to resound with the roar of the cascade: sometimes lying at the foot of a tree, I have listened to the song of the linnet or the nightingale. At other times I have hunted or fished; and, what has given me more rational delight than all these pastimes, I have whiled away many a profitable hour in the improvement of my mind.

I interrupted my secretary in a tone of eager inquiry, to ask where he had procured books. I found them, said he, in an elegant library here in the house, whither master Joachim took me. Heyday! in what corner, resumed I, can this said library be? Did we not go over the whole building on the day of our arrival? You fancied so, rejoined he; but you are to know that we only explored three sides of the square, and forgot the fourth. It was there that Don Cæsar, when he came to Lirias, employed part of his time in reading. There are in this library some very good books, left as a never-failing phylactery against the blue devils, when our gardens despoiled of Flora's treasure, and our woods of their leafy honours, shall no longer challenge those miscreant invaders to combat in the forest or the bower. The lords of Leyva have not done things by halves, but have catered for the mind as well as for the body.

This intelligence filled me with sincere rapture. I was shewn to the fourth side of the square, and feasted with an intellectual banquet. Don Cæsar's room I immediately determined to make my own. That nobleman's bed was still there, with correspondent furniture, consisting of historical tapestry, representing the rape of the Sabine women by the Romans. From the bed-chamber, I went into a closet fitted up with low bookcases well filled, and over

them the portraits of the Spanish kings. Near a window whence you command a prospect of a most bewitching country, there was an ebony writing-desk and a large sofa, covered with black morocco. But I gave my attention principally to the library. It was composed of philosophers, poets, historians; and abounded in romances. Don Cæsar seemed to give the preference to that light reading, if one might judge by the profusion of supply. I must own, to my shame, that my taste was not at all above the level of those productions, notwithstanding the extravagances they delight in stringing together: whether it was owing to my not being a very critical reader at that time, or because the Spaniards are naturally addicted to the marvellous. I must nevertheless plead in my own justification, that I was alive to the charms of a sprightly and popular morality, and that Lucian, Horace, and Erasmus became my favourite and standard authors.

My friend, said I to Scipio, when my eyes had coursed over my library, here is wherewithal to feed and pamper our minds; but our present business is to reform our household. On that subject I can spare you a great deal of trouble, answered he. During your absence I have sifted your people thoroughly, and flatter myself it is no empty boast to say that I know them. Let us begin with master Joachim: I take him to be as great a scoundrel as ever breathed, and have no doubt but he was turned away from the archbishop's for errors which were too great to be excepted in the passing of his accounts. Yet we must keep him for two reasons: the first, because he is a good cook; and the second, because I shall always have an eye over him; I shall peep into his actions like a jackdaw into a marrow-bone, and he must be a more cunning fellow than I take him for, to evade my vigilance. I have already told him that you intended discharging three-fourths of your establishment. This declaration stuck in his stomach; and he assured me that, owing to his extreme desire of living with you, he would be satisfied with half his present wages rather than be turned off, which made me suspect that he was tied to the string of some petticoat in the hamlet, and did not like to break up his quarters. As for the under-cook, he is a drunkard, and the porter a foul-mouthed Cerberus, of whose guardianship our gates are in no want;

neither is the gamekeeper a necessary evil. I shall take the latter office myself, as you may see to-morrow, when we have got our fowling-pieces in order, and are provided with powder and shot. With regard to the footmen, one of them is an Arragonese, and to my mind a very good sort of fellow. We will keep him; but all the rest are such rapscallions, that I would not advise you to harbour one of them, if you wanted an army of attendants.

After having fully debated the point, we resolved to keep well with the cook, the scullion, the Arragonese, and to get rid of the remainder as decently as we could: all which was planned and executed on the same day, mollifying the bitter dose by the application of a few pistoles, which Scipio took from our strong box, and distributed among them as from me. When we had carried this reform into effect, order was soon established in our mansion; we divided the business fairly among our remaining people, and began to look into our expenses. I could willingly have been contented with very frugal commons; but my secretary, loving high dishes and relishing bits, was not a man who would suffer master Joachim to hold his place as a sinecure. He kept his talents in such constant play, working double tides at dinner and at supper, that any one would have thought we had been converted by father Hilary, and were working out the term of our probation.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LOVES OF GIL BLAS AND THE FAIR ANTONIA

Two days after my return from Valencia to Lirias, clod-pole Basil, my farming man, came at my dressing-time, to beg the favour of introducing his daughter Antonia, who was very desirous, as he said, to have the honour of paying her respects to her new master. I answered that it was very proper, and would be well received. He withdrew, and in a few minutes returned with his peerless Antonia. That epithet, though bold, will not be thought extravagant, in the case of a girl from sixteen to eighteen years of age, uniting to regular features the finest complexion and the brightest eyes in the world. She was dressed in nothing

better than a stuff gown; but a stature somewhat above the female standard, a dignified deportment, and such graces as soared higher than the mere freshness and glow of youth, communicated to her rustic attire the simplicity of classical costume. She had no cap on her head; her hair was fastened behind with a knot of flowers, according to the chaste severity of the Spartan fashionables.

When she illumined my chamber with her presence, I was struck as much on a heap by her beauty, as ever were the princes, knights, nobles, and strangers assembled at the solemn feast and tournament of Charlemain, by the personal charms of Angelica. Instead of receiving Antonia with modish indifference, and paying her compliments of course, instead of ringing the changes on her father's happiness in possessing so lovely a daughter, I stood stock still, staring, gaping, stammering: I could not have uttered an articulate sound for the universal world. Scipio, who saw clearly what was the matter with me, took the words out of my mouth, and accepted those bills of admiration which my affairs were in too much disorder to admit of my duly honouring. For her part, my figure being shrouded by a dressing-gown and night-cap, like the orb of day by a winter fog, she accosted me without being shame-faced, and paid her duty in terms which fired all the combustibles in my composition, though her words were but the holiday expressions of common-place salutation. In the mean time, while my secretary, Basil, and his daughter, were engaged in reciprocal exchange of civility, I found my senses again; and passed from one extreme of absurdity to another, just as if I had thought that a hare-brained loquacity would be a set-off against the idiotic silence of my first encounter. I exhausted all my stock of well-bred rodomontade; and expressed myself with so unguarded a freedom, as to make Basil look about him: so that he, with his eye upon me as a man who would set every engine at work to seduce Antonia, was in a hurry to get her safely out of my apartment, with a resolved purpose, probably, of withdrawing her for ever from my pursuit.

Scipio finding himself alone with me, said with a smile: Here is another defence for you against the blue devils! I did not know that your farming man had so pretty a daughter; for I had never seen her before, though I have

been twice at his house. He must have taken infinite pains to keep her out of the way, and it is impossible to be angry with him for it. What the plague! here is a morsel for a liquorish palate! But there seems to be no necessity for blazoning her perfections to you; their very first glance dazzled you out of countenance. I do not deny it, answered I. Ah! my beloved friend, I have surely seen an inhabitant of the realms above; the electrical spark now thrills through all my frame, it scorches like lightning, yet tingles like the vivifying fluid at my heart.

You delight me beyond measure, replied my secretary, by giving me to understand that you have at length fallen in love. Nothing but a mistress was wanting to complete your rural establishment at all points. Thanks to Heaven, you are now likely to be accommodated in every way. I am well aware that we shall have a hard matter to elude Basil's vigilance; but leave that to me, and I will undertake before the end of three days to manage a private meeting for you with Antonia. Master Scipio, said I, it is not so sure that you would be able to keep your word; but at all events, I have not the least desire to make the experiment. I will have nothing to do with the ruin of that girl; for she is an angel, and does not deserve to be numbered among the fallen ones. Therefore, instead of laying the guilt upon your soul of assisting me in her dishonour, I have made up my mind to marry her with your kind help, supposing her heart not to be pre-occupied by a prior attachment. I had no idea, said he, of your directly plunging headlong into the cold bath of matrimony. The generality of landlords, in your place, would stand upon the ancient tenure of manorial rights: they would not deal with Antonia upon the square of modern law and gospel, till after failure in the establishment of their feudal privileges. But though this may be the way of the world, do not suppose that I am by any means against your honourable passion, or at all wish to dissuade you from your purpose. Your bailiff's daughter deserves the distinction you design for her, if she can give you the first-fruits of her heart, an offering of sensibility and gratitude; that is what I shall ascertain this very day by talking with her father, and possibly with her.

My agent was a man to transact his business according

to the letter. He went to see Basil privately, and in the evening came to me in my closet, where I waited for him with impatience, somewhat exasperated by apprehension. There was a slyness in his countenance, whence my prognostic inclined to the brighter side. Judging, said I, by that look of suppressed merriment, you are come to acquaint me that I shall soon be at the summit of human bliss. Yes, my dear master, answered he, the heavens smile upon your vows. I have talked the matter over with Basil and his daughter, declaring your intentions without reserve. The father is delighted at the idea of your asking his blessing as a son-in-law; and you may set your heart at rest about Antonia's taste in a husband. Darts and flames! cried I in an ecstacy of amorous transport; what! am I so happy as to have made myself agreeable to that lovely creature? Never question it, replied he; she loves you already. It is true, she has not owned so much by word of mouth; but my assurance rests on the tale-telling sparkle of her eye, when your proposals were made known to her. And yet you have a rival! A rival! exclaimed I, with a faltering voice, and a cheek blanched with fear. Do not let that give you the least uneasiness, said he; your competitor cannot bid very high, for he is no other than master Joachim your cook. Ah! the hangdog! said I, with an involuntary shout of laughter: this is the reason, then, why he had so great an objection to being turned out of my service. Exactly so, answered Scipio; within these few days he made proposals of marriage to Antonia, who politely declined them. With submission to your better judgment, replied I, it would be expedient, at least so it strikes me, to get rid of that strange fellow, before he is informed of my intended match with Basil's daughter: a cook, as you are aware, is a dangerous rival. You are perfectly in the right, rejoined my trusty counsellor; we must clear the premises of him—he shall receive his discharge from me to-morrow morning. before he puts a finger in the fricandeaus; thus you will have nothing more to fear either from his poisonous sauces or bewitching tongue. Yet it goes rather against the grain with me to part with so good a cook; but I sacrifice the interests of my own belly to the preservation of your precious person. You need not, said I, take on so for his loss: he had no exclusive

patent; and I will send to Valencia for a cook, who shall outcook all his fine cookery. According to my promise I wrote immediately to Don Alphonso, to let him know that our kitchen wanted a prime minister; and on the following day he filled up the vacancy in so worthy a manner, as reconciled Scipio at once to the change in culinary politics.

Though my adroit and active secretary had assured me of Antonia's secret self-congratulation on the conquest of her landlord's heart, I could not venture to rely solely on his report. I was fearful lest he should have been entrapped by false appearances. To be more certain of my bliss, I determined on speaking in person to the fair Antonia. I therefore went to Basil's house, and confirmed to him what my ambassador had announced. This honest peasant, of patriarchal simplicity and golden-aged frankness, after having heard me through, did not hesitate to own that it would be the greatest happiness of his life to give me his daughter; but, added he, you are by no means to suppose that it is because you are lord of the manor. Were you still steward to Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso, I should prefer you to all other suitors who might apply: I have always felt a sort of kindness towards you: and nothing vexes me, but that Antonia has not a thumping fortune to bring with her. I want not the vile dross, said I; her person is the only dowry that I covet. Your humble servant for that, cried he; but you will not settle accounts with me after that fashion; I am not a beggar, to marry my daughter upon charity. Basil de Buenotrigo is in circumstances, by the blessing of Providence, to portion her off decently; and I mean that she should set out a little supper, if you are to be at the expense of dinners. In a word, the rental of this estate is only five hundred ducats: I shall raise it to a thousand on the strength of this marriage.

Just as you please, my dear Basil, replied I; we are not likely to have any dispute about money matters. We are both of a mind; all that remains is to get your daughter's consent. You have mine, said he, and that is enough. Not altogether so, answered I; though yours may be absolutely necessary, no business can be done without hers. Hers follows mine of course, replied he; I should like to

catch her murmuring against my sovereign commands! Antonia, rejoined I, with dutiful submission to paternal authority, is ready without question to obey your will implicitly in all things; but I know not whether in the present instance she would do so without violence to her own feelings; and should that be the case, I could never forgive myself for being the occasion of unhappiness to her; in short, it is not enough that I obtain her hand from you, if her heart is to heave a sigh at the decision of her destiny. Oh, blessed virgin! said Basil, all these fine doctrines of philosophy are far above my reach; speak to Antonia your own self, and you will find, or I am very much mistaken, that she wishes for nothing better than to be your wife. These words were no sooner out of his mouth than he called his daughter, and left me with her for a few short minutes.

Not to trifle with so precious an opportunity, I broke my mind to her at once: Lovely Antonia, said I, it remains with you to fix the colour of my future days. Though I have your father's consent, do not think so meanly of me as to suppose that I would avail myself of it to violate the sacred freedom of your choice. Rapturous as must be the possession of your charms, I waive my pretensions if you but tell me that your duty and not your will complies. It would be affectation to put on such a repugnance, answered she; the honour of your addresses is too flattering to excite any other than agreeable sensations, and I am thankful for my father's tender care of me, instead of demurring to his will. I am not sure whether such an acknowledgment may not be contrary to the rules of female reserve in the polite world; but if you were disagreeable to me, I should be plain-spoken enough to tell you so; why, then, should I not be equally free in owning the kind feelings of my heart?

At sounds like these, which I could not hear without being enraptured, I dropped on my knee before Antonia, and in the excess of my tender emotions, taking one of her fair hands, kissed it with an affectionate and impassioned action. My dear Antonia, said I, your frankness enchants me; go on, let nothing induce you to depart from it; you are conversing with your future husband; let your soul expand itself, and reveal all its inmost emotions in his

presence. Thus, then, may I entertain the flattering hope that you will not frown on the union of our destines! The coming in of Basil at this moment prevented me from giving further vent to the delightful sensations which thrilled through me. Impatient to know how his daughter had behaved, and ready primed for scolding in case she had been perverse or coy, he made up to me immediately. Well, now! said he, are you satisfied with Antonia? So much so, answered I, that I am going this very moment to set forward the preparations for our marriage. So saying, I left the father and daughter, for the purpose of taking counsel with my secretary thereupon.

CHAPTER IX

NUPTIALS OF GIL BLAS WITH THE FAIR ANTONIA; THE STYLE AND MANNER OF THE CEREMONY; THE PERSONS ASSISTING THEREAT; AND THE FESTIVITIES ENSUING THEREUPON

THOUGH there was no occasion to consult with the lords of Leyva about my marriage, yet both Scipio and myself were of opinion that I could not decently do otherwise than communicate to them my purpose of connecting myself with Basil's daughter, and just pay them the compliment of asking their advice, after the act was finally determined on.

I immediately went off for Valencia, where my visit was a matter of surprise, and still more the purport of it. Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso, who were acquainted with Antonia, having seen her more than once, wished me joy on my good fortune in a wife. Don Cæsar, in particular, made his speech upon the occasion with so much youthful fire, that if there had not been reason to suppose his lordship weaned, by that icy moralist, time, from certain naughty propensities, I should have suspected him of going to Lirias now and then, not so much to look after his concerns there, as after his little empress of the dairy. Seraphina, too, with the kindest assurances of a lively interest in whatever might befall me, said that she had heard a very favourable character of Antonia; but,

added she, with a malicious fling, as if to taunt me with my supercilious reception of Sephora's amorous advances, even though her beauty had not been so much the talk of the country, I could have depended on your taste, from former experience of its delicacy and fastidiousness.

Don Cæsar and his son did not stop at cold approbation of my marriage, but declared that they would defray all the expenses of it. Measure back your steps, said they, to Lirias, and stay quietly there till you hear further from us. Make no preparation for your nuptials, for we shall make that our concern. To meet their kind intentions with becoming gratitude, I returned to my mansion, and acquainted Basil and his daughter with the projected kindness of our patrons. We determined to wait their pleasure with as much patience as falls to the lot of poor human nature under such circumstances. Eight long days dragged out their tedious measure, and brought no tidings of our bliss. But the rewards of self-control are not the less assured for being slow: on the ninth, a coach drawn by four mules drove up, with a cargo of mantua-makers for the bride, and an assortment of rich silks on which to exercise their art. Several livery servants, mounted on mules, accompanied the cavalcade. One of them brought me a letter from Don Alphonso. That nobleman sent me word that he would be at Lirias next day with his father and his wife, and that the marriage ceremony should be performed on the day after that, by the vicar-general of Valencia. And just so it came to pass: Don Cæsar, his son, and Seraphina, with that venerable dignitary, were punctual to their appointment; all four of them in a coach and six; none of your mules, like the mantua-makers! preceded by another coach and four, with Seraphina's women; and the rear was brought up by a company of the governor's guards.

The governor's lady had hardly entered the house, before she testified an ardent longing to see Antonia, who on her part no sooner knew that Seraphina was arrived, than she ran forward to bid her welcome, with a respectful kiss upon her hand, so gracefully and modestly impressed, that all the company were enchanted at the action. And now, madam! said Don Cæsar to his daughter-in-law, what do you think of Antonia? Could Santillane have made a better choice? No, answered Seraphina, they are worthy

each of the other; there can be no doubt but their union will be most happy. In short, every one was lavish in the praise of my intended; and if they felt her beams so powerfully under the eclipse of a stuff gown, what must they not have endured from her brightness, in the meridian sunshine of her wedding finery? One would have fancied she had been clothed in silks, jewels, and fine linen from her cradle, by the dignity of her air and the ease of her deportment.

The happy moment which was to unite two fond lovers in the bands of Hymen being arrived, Don Alphonso took me by the hand and led me to the altar, while Seraphina conferred the like honour on the bride elect. Our procession had marched in fit and decent order through the hamlet to the chapel, where the vicar-general was waiting to go through the service; and the ceremony was performed amidst the heartfelt congratulations of the inhabitants, and of all the wealthy farmers in the neighbourhood, whom Basil had invited to Antonia's wedding. Their daughters too came in their train, tricked out in ribbons and in flowers, and dancing to the music of their own tambourines. We returned to the mansion under the same escort: and there, by the provident attentions of Scipio, who officiated as high steward and master of the ceremonies, we found three tables set out; one for the principals of the party, another for their household, and the third, which was by far the largest, for all invited guests promiscuously. Antonia was at the first, the governor's lady having made a point of it; I did the honours of the second, and Basil was placed at the head of that where the country people dined. As for Scipio, he never sat down, but was here, there, and everywhere, fetching and carrying, changing plates and filling bumpers, urging the company to call freely for what they wanted, and egging them on to mirth and jollity.

The entertainment had been prepared by the governor's cooks; and that is as much as to say, that there were all the delicacies imaginable, in season or out of season. The good wines laid in for me by master Joachim, were set running at a furious rate; the guests were begninning to feel their jovial influence, pleasantry and repartee gave a zest and conviviality, when on a sudden our harmony was interrupted by an alarming occurrence. My secretary,

being in the hall where I was dining with Don Alphonso's principal officers and Seraphina's women, suddenly fainted. I started up and ran to his assistance; and while I was employed in bringing him about, one of the women was taken ill also. It was evident to the whole company that this sympathetic malady must involve some mysterious incident, as in effect it turned out almost immediately, that thereby hung a tale; for Scipio soon recovered, and said to me in a low voice, Why must one man's meat be another man's poison, and the most auspicious of your days the curse of mine? But every man bears the bundle of his sins upon his back, and my pack-saddle is once more thrown across my shoulders in the person of my wife.

Powers of mercy! exclaimed I, this can never be; it is all a romance. What! you the husband of that lady whose nerves were so affected by the disturbance? Yes, sir, answered he, I am her husband; and fortune, if you will take the word of a sinner, could not have done me a dirtier office than by conjuring up such a grievance as this. I know not, my friend, replied I, what reasons you may have for thus belabouring your rib with wordy buffets, but however she may be to blame, in mercy keep a bridle on your tongue; if you have any regard for me, do not displace the mirth and spoil the pleasure of this nuptial meeting, by ominous disorder or enraged questions of past injuries. You shall have no reason to complain on that score, rejoined Scipio; but shall see presently whether I am not a very apt dissembler.

With this assurance he went forward to his wife, whom her companions had also brought back to life and recollection; and, embracing her with as much apparent fervour as if his raptures had been real, Ah, my dear Beatrice, said he, heaven has at length united us again after ten years of cruel separation! But this blissful moment is well purchased by whole ages of torturing suspense! I know not, answered his spouse, whether you really are at all the happier for having recovered a part of yourself: but of this at least I am fully certain, that you never had any reason to run away from me as you did. A fine story indeed! You found me one night with Signor Don Ferdinand de Leyva, who was in love with my mistress Julia, and consulted me on the subject of his passion; and only

for that, you must take it into your stupid head, that I was caballing with him against your honour and my own: thereupon that poor brain of yours was turned with jealousy; you quitted Toledo in a huff, and ran away from your own flesh and blood as you would from a monster of the deserts, without leaving word why or wherefore. Now which of us two, be so good as to tell me, has most reason to take on and be pettish? Your own dear self, beyond all question, replied Scipio. Beyond all question, re-echoed she, my own ill-used self. Don Ferdinand, very shortly after you had taken yourself off from Toledo, married Julia, with whom I continued as long as she lived; and, after we had lost her by sudden death, I came into my lady her sister's service, who, as well as all her maids, and I would do as much for them, will give me a good character; honest and sober, and a very termagant among the impertinent fellows.

My secretary, having nothing to allege against such a character from my lady and her maids, was determined to make the best of a bad bargain. Once for all, said he to his spouse, I acknowledge my bad behaviour, and beg pardon for it before this honourable assembly. It was now time for me to act the mediator, and to move Beatrice for an act of amnesty, assuring her that her husband from this time forward would make it the great object of his life to play the husband to her satisfaction. She began to see that there was reason in roasting of eggs, and all present were loud in their congratulations, on the triumph of suffering virtue, and the renovated pledge of broken vows. To bind the contract firmer, and make it memorable, they were seated next to one another at table; their healths were drank according to the laws of toasting; wish you joy! many returns of this happy day! rang round on every side: one would have sworn that the dinner was given for their reconciliation, and not on account of my marriage.

The third table was the first to be cleared. The young villagers jumped up in a body; the lads took out their blooming partners; the tambourines struck up a merry beat; spectators flocked from the other tables, and caught the enlivening spirit from the gay bustle of the scene. Every limb and muscle of every individual was in motion: the household of the governor and his lady formed a set,

apart from the rustics of the company, while their superiors did not disdain to mingle with the homelier dancers. Don Alphonso danced a saraband with Seraphina, and Don Cæsar another with Antonia, who afterwards took me for her partner. She did not perform much amiss, considering that she never got much further than the five positions, in learning which she had her ankles kicked to pieces by a provincial dancing-master at Albarazin, while on a visit to a tradesman's wife, one of her relations. As for me, who, as I have already said, had taken lessons at the Marchioness de Chaves's, I figured away as the principal man in this rural ballet. With regard to Beatrice and Scipio, they preferred a little private conversation to dancing, that they might compare notes on the subject of wear and tear during the painful period of separation: but their billing and cooing was interrupted by Seraphina, who, having been informed of this dramatic discovery, sent for them to pay the customary compliments of congratulation. My good people, said she, on this day of general joy, it gives me additional pleasure to see you two restored to one another. My friend Scipio, I return you your wife under a firm belief that she has always conducted herself as became a woman; take up your abode with her here, and be a good husband to her. And you, Beatrice, attach yourself to Antonia, and let her be as much the object of your devoted service as Signor de Santillane is that of your husband. Scipio, who could not possibly, after this, think of Penelope as fit to hold a candle to his own wife, promised to treat her with all the deference due to such a paragon of conjugal fidelity.

The country people, having kept up the dance till late, withdrew to their own homes; but the rejoicings were prolonged by the company in the house. There was a grand supper, and at bed-time the vicar-general pronounced the blessing of consummation. Seraphina undressed the bride, and the lords of Leyva did me the same honour. The ridiculous part of the business was, that Don Alphonso's officers and his lady's attendants took it into their heads, by way of diverting themselves, to perform the same ceremony: they also undressed Beatrice and Scipio, who, to render the scene supremely farcical, gravely allowed themselves to be untrussed, and put to bed with all nuptial pomp and state.

CHAPTER X

THE HONEY-MOON (A VERY DULL TIME FOR THE READER AS A THIRD PERSON) ENLIVENED BY THE COMMENCEMENT OF SCIPIO'S STORY

"'Tis heaven itself, 'tis ecstasy of bliss,
Uninterrupted joy, untired excess;
Mirth following mirth, the moments dance away;
Love claims the night, and friendship rules the day."

On the day after the wedding the lords of Leyva returned to Valencia, after having lavished on me a thousand marks of friendship. There was such a general clearance, that my secretary and myself, with our respective wives, and our usual establishment, were left in undisturbed possession of our own home.

The efforts which we both made to please our ladies were not thrown away: I breathed by degrees into the partner of my joys and sorrows as much love for me as I entertained for her; and Scipio made his better part forget the woes and privations he had occasioned her. Beatrice, who had very winning ways with her, and was all things to all women, had no difficulty about worming herself into the good graces of her new mistress, and gaining her complete confidence. In short, we all four agreed admirably well together, and began to enjoy a bliss above the common lot of humanity. Every day rolled along more delightfully than the last. Antonia was pensive and demure; but Beatrice and myself were enlisted in the crew of mirth; and even though we had been constitutionally sedate, Scipio was among us, and he was of himself a pill to purge melancholy. The best creature in the world for a snug little party! one of those merry drolls who have only to shew their comical faces, and set the table in a roar of inextinguishable laughter.

One day, when we had taken a fancy to go after dinner, and doze away the usual interval in the most sequestered spot about the grounds, my secretary got into such exuberant spirits, as to chase away the drowsy god by his exhilarating sallies. Do hold your tongue, my loquacious

friend, said I: or else, if you are determined to wage war against this lazy custom of our afternoons, at least tell us something which we shall be the wiser for hearing. With all my heart and soul, sir, answered he. Would you have me go through all fabulous histories of wandering knights, distressed damsels, giants, enchanted castles, and the whole train of legendary adventures? I had much rather hear your own true history, replied I; but that is a pleasure which you have not thought fit to give me so long as we have lived together, and I seem likely to go without it to the end of the chapter. How happens that? said he. If I have not told you my own story, it is because you never expressed the slightest wish to be troubled with the recital: therefore it is not my fault if you are in the dark about my past life; but if you are really at all curious to be let into the secret, my loquacity is very much at your service on the occasion. Antonia, Beatrice, and myself, unanimously took him at his word, and arranged ourselves for listening like an attentive audience. The speculation was a safe one on our parts; for the tale was sure to answer, either as a stimulant or a soporific.

I certainly ought to have been descended, said Scipio, from some family of the highest rank and earliest antiquity; or in default of such parentage, from the most distinguished orders of personal merit, such as that of St James or Alcantara, if a man may be permitted to decide on the fittest circumstances for his own birth: but as it is not among the privileges of human nature to elect one's own father, you are to know that mine, by name Torribio Scipio, was a subaltern myrmidon of the Holy Brotherhood. As he was going back and fore on the king's highway, and looking after business in his own line, he met once on a time, between Cuença and Toledo, with a young Bohemian babe of chance, who appeared very pretty in his eyes. She was alone, on foot, and carried her whole patrimony at her back in a kind of knapsack. Whither are you going, my little darling? said he in a philandering tone of voice, unlike the natural hoarseness of his accents. Good worthy gentleman, answered she, I am going to Toledo, where I hope to gain an honest livelihood by hook or by crook. Your intentions are highly commendable, retorted he; and I doubt not but you have many a hook

and many a crook among the implements of your trade. Yes, with a blessing on my endeavours, rejoined she: I have several little ways of doing for myself: I know how to make washes and creams for the ladies' faces, perfumes for their noses and their chambers; then I can tell fortunes, can search for things lost with a sieve and shears, and erect figures for the taking in of shadows with a glass.

Torribio, concluding that so well-provided a girl would be a very advantageous match for a man like himself, who could scarcely scrape wherewithal to support life by his own profession, though he was as good a thief-taker as the best of them, made her an offer of marriage, and she was nothing loth, nor prudishly coy. They flew on the wings of inclination and convenience to Toledo, where they were joined together; and you behold in me the happy pledge of holy and lawful matrimony. They fixed themselves in a shop on the outskirts of the town, where my mother commenced her career by selling the said washes, creams, tapes, laces, silk, thread, toys, and pedlar's ware; but trade not being brisk enough to live comfortably by it, she turned fortune-teller. This drew her customers, got her countenance, credit, crowns, and pistoles: a thousand dupes of either sex soon trumpeted up the reputation of Coselina; for so my gipsy mamma had the honour to be named. Some one or other came every day to bargain for the exercise of her skill in the black art: at one time a nephew at his wit's and purse's end, wanting to know how soon his uncle was to set off post for the other world, and leave behind him wherewithal to piece his worn-out fortunes: at another, some yielding, love-sick girl, to inquire whether the swain who kept her company, and had promised to marry her, would keep his word or be false-hearted.

You will take notice, if you please, that my mother always sold good luck for good money; if the accomplishment trod on the heels of the prediction, well and good; if it was fulfilled according to the rule of contraries, she was always cool, though the parties were ever so violently in a passion, and told them plainly that it was her familiar's fault, not hers; for though she paid him the highest wages, and bound him by potent spells to stir up the cauldron of futurity from the bottom, like earthly cooks, he would

sometimes be careless or out of humour, and apportion the ingredients wrongly.

When my mother thought the conjuncture momentous enough to raise the devil without cheapening him in the eyes of the vulgar, Torribio Scipio enacted his infernal majesty, and played the part just as if he had been born to it, humouring the hideous features of the character by a very small aggravation of his own natural face, and practising the pandemonian note of elocution in the lower octave of his voice. A person in the slightest degree superstitious would be scared out of his senses at my father's figure. But one day, as his satanic prototype would have it, there came a savage rascal of a captain, who asked to see the devil, for no earthly purpose but to run him clean through the body. The Inquisition, having received notice of the devil's death, sent to take charge of his widow, and administer to his effects; as for poor little me, just seven years old at the time, I was sent to the foundling hospital. There were some charitable ecclesiastics on that establishment, who, being liberally paid for the education of the poor orphans, were so zealous in their office as to teach them reading and writing. They fancied there was something particularly promising about me, which made them pick me out from all the rest, and send me on their errands. I was letter-carrier, messenger, and chapel clerk. As a token of their gratitude, they undertook to teach me Latin; but their mode of tuition was so harsh, and their discipline so severe, though I was a sort of pet with them, that, not being able to stand it any longer, I ran away one morning while out on an errand; and, so far from returning to the hospital, got out of Toledo through the suburbs on the Seville side.

Though I had not then completed my ninth year, I already felt the pleasure of being free, and master of my own actions. I was without money and without food; no matter! I had no lessons to say by heart, no themes to hammer out. After having pushed on for two hours, my little legs began to refuse their office. I had never before made so long a trip. It became necessary to stop and take some rest. I sat myself down at the foot of a tree close by the highway; there, by way of amusement, I took my grammar out of my pocket, and began conning it over by

way of a joke; but at length, coming to recollect the raps on the knuckles, and the castigations on the more classical seat of punishment which it had cost me, I tore it leaf by leaf with an apostrophe of angry import. Ah! you odious thing of a book! you shall never make me shed tears any more. While I was assuaging my vindictive spirit, by strewing the ground about me with declensions and conjugations, there passed that way a hermit with a white beard, with a large pair of spectacles on his nose, and altogether an outside of much sanctity. He came up to me; and, if I was an object of speculation to him, he was no less so to me. My little man, said he with a smile, it should seem as if we had both taken a sudden liking to each other, and in that case we cannot do better than to live together in my hermitage, which is not two hundred yards distant. Your most obedient for that, answered I pertly enough; I have not the least desire to turn hermit. At this answer, the good old man set up a roar of laughter, and said with a kind embrace: You must not be frightened at my dress; if it is not becoming, it is useful; it gives me my title to a charming retreat, and to the good-will of the neighbouring villages, whose inhabitants love or rather idolize me. Come this way, and I will clothe you in a jacket of the same stuff as mine. If you think well of it, you shall share with me the pleasures of the life I lead; and, if it does not hit your fancy, you shall not only be at liberty to leave me, but you may depend on it that in the event of our parting, I shall not fail to do something handsome by you.

I suffered myself to be persuaded, and followed the old hermit, who put several questions to me, which I answered with a truth-telling simplicity, not always to be found in a more advanced stage of morality. On our arrival at the hermitage he set some fruit before me, which I devoured, having eaten nothing all day but a slice of dry bread, on which I had breakfasted at the hospital in the morning. The recluse, seeing me play so good a part with my jaws, said: Courage, my good boy, do not spare my fruit; there is plenty of it, Heaven be praised. I have not brought you hither to starve you. And indeed that was true enough; for an hour after our coming in, he kindled a fire, put a leg of mutton down to roast; and while I turned the spit, laid a

nall table for himself and me, with a very dirty napkin pon it.

When the meat was done enough he took it up, and cut me slices for our supper, which was no dry bargain, since e quaffed a delicious wine, of which he had laid in ample ore. Well! my chicken, said he, as he rose from table, re you satisfied with my style of living? You see how e shall fare every day, if you fix your quarters here. hen with respect to liberty, you shall do just as you please this hermitage. All I require of you is to accompany e whenever I go begging to the neighbouring villages; ou will be of use in driving an ass laden with two anniers, which the charitable peasants usually fill with ggs, bread, meat, and fish. I ask no more than that. I ill do, said I, whatever you desire, provided you will not blige me to learn Latin. Friar Chrysostom, for that was e old hermit's name, could not help smiling at my school-oy frowardness, and assured me once more that he should ot pretend to interfere either with my studies or my clinations.

On the very next day we went on a foraging party with e donkey, which I led by the halter. We made a profit-ble gleaning; for all the farmers took a pleasure in throwing mewhat into our panniers. One chucked in an uncut af, another a large piece of bacon; here a goose, there a air of giblets, and a partridge to crown the whole. But ithout entering further into particulars, we carried home rovender enough for a week; and hence you may infer e esteem and friendship in which the country people eld the holy man. It is true that he was a great blessing the neighbourhood: his advice was always at their ser-ice when they came to consult him: he restored peace here discord had reigned in families, and made up matches r the daughters; he had a nostrum for almost any disease ou could mention, with an assortment of pious rituals, to vert the curse of barrenness.

Hence you perceive that I was in no danger of starving my hermitage. My lodging, too, was none of the worst: retched on good fresh straw, with a cushion of ratteen nder my head, and a coverlet over me of the same stuff. made but one nap of it all night. Brother Chrysostom, ho had promised me a hermit's dress, made up an old gown

of his own for me, and called me little brother Scipio. No sooner did I appear in my religious uniform, than the ass's back suffered for my genteel appearance in the eyes of the villagers. It was who should give most to the little brother! so much were they delighted with his spruce figure.

The easy, slothful life I led with the old hermit could not be very revolting to a boy of my age. On the contrary, it suited my taste so exactly, that I should have continued it to this time, but that the fates and destinies were weaving a more complicated tissue for my future years. It was cast in the figure of my nativity, early to rouse myself from the effeminacy of a religious life, and to take leave of brother Chrysostom after the following manner.

I often observed the old man at work upon his pillow, unsewing and sewing it up again; and one day, I saw him put in some money. This circumstance excited a tingling curiosity, which I promised myself to satisfy the first time he went to Toledo, as he generally did once a week. I waited impatiently for the day, but as yet, without any other motive than the mere desire of prying. At last the good man went his way, and I unpicked his pillow, where I found, among the stuffing, the amount of about fifty crowns in all sorts of coin.

This treasure must have accumulated from the gratitude of the peasantry, whom the hermit had cured by his nostrums, and of their wives, who had become pregnant by virtue of his spiritual interference. But however it got there, I no sooner set my eyes on the money, which might be mine without any one near me to say nay, than the gipsy voice of nature and pedigree spoke within me. An inextinguishable itch of pilfering tingled in my veins, and proved that we come into the world with the mark of our descent, and with our characters about us. I yielded to the temptation without a struggle; tied up my booty in a canvas bag where we kept our combs and night-caps: then, having laid aside the hermit's and resumed my foundling's dress, got clear off from the hermitage, and hugged my bag as though it had contained the boundless treasure of the Indies.

You have heard my first exploit, continued Scipio; and I doubt not but you will expect a succession of similar practices. Your anticipations will not be disappointed;

or there are many such evidences of genius behind, before come to those of my actions which prove me good as well as clever; but I shall come to them, and you will be convinced by the sequel, that a scoundrel born may be licked into virtue, as the cub of a bear into shape.

Child as I was, I knew better than to take the Toledo road; it would have been exposing myself to the hazard of meeting friar Chrysostom, who would have balanced accounts with me on a very thriftless principle. I therefore travelled in another direction leading to the village of Galves, where I stopped at an inn, kept by a landlady who was a widow of forty, and hung out the bunch of grapes to a very good purpose. This good woman no sooner clenned me, than, judging by my dress that I must be a truant from the orphan school, she asked who I was and whither I was going. I answered that, having lost my father and mother, I was looking for a place. Can you read, my dear? said she. I assured her that I could read, and write too, with the best of them. In point of fact, I could just form my letters, and join them so as to look a little like writing; and that was clerkship enough for a village pothouse. Then I will take you into my service, replied the hostess. You may earn your board easily enough, by scoring up the customers, and keeping my ledger. I shall give you no wages, because this inn is frequented by very genteel company, who never forget the waiters. You may reckon upon very considerable perquisites.

I clenched the bargain, reserving to myself, as you may suppose, the right of emigration whenever my abode at Galves should cease to be pleasant. No sooner was I settled in my place, than a weight lay heavy on my mind. I did not wish it to be known that I had money; and it was so easy matter to devise where it could be hidden, so as that what was sauce for the goose should not be sauce for the gander. I was not yet well enough acquainted with the house to trust the places obviously most proper for such a deposit. What a source of embarrassment is great wealth! I determined, however, on a corner of our granary under some straw; and believing it to be safer there than anywhere else, made myself as easy about it as I well could.

The household consisted of three servants: a lubberly

ostler, a young Galician chambermaid, and myself. Each of us spunged what we could upon travellers, whether on foot or on horseback. I always came in for some small change, when the bill was paid. Then the equestrians gave something to the ostler, for taking care of their beasts; but as for our female fellow-servant, the muleteers who passed that way chucked her under the chin, and gave her more crowns than we got farthings. I had no sooner realized a penny, than away it went to the granary, and slept with its precursors; so that the higher rose my heap, the more greedy did my little heart become. Sometimes would I kiss the hallowed images of my idolatry, and look at them with a devotional glow, which few worshippers feel, but those whose religion is their gold.

This inordinate passion sent me back and fore to gratify it, at least thirty times a day. I often met the landlady on the staircase. She, being naturally of a suspicious temper, had a mind to find out one day what could carry me every minute to the corn-loft. She therefore went up and began rummaging about everywhere, supposing perhaps that it was my receptacle for articles purloined in the house. Of course she did not forget to pull the straw about; and behold, there was my bag! Two hands in a dish and one in a purse, was not one of her proverbs; so that finding the contents in crowns and pistoles, she thought, or seemed to think, that the money was lawfully and honestly hers. At least she had possession, and that is nine points of the law, though scarcely one of honesty. But to do the thing decently, after calling me little wretch, little rascal, and so forth, she ordered the ostler, a fellow without any will but hers, to give me a hearty flogging; and then turn me out of doors, with this salt eel for my breakfast, and a lady-like oath that no light-fingered gentry should ever darken her doors. In vain did I protest and vow that I never wronged my mistress: she affirmed the direct contrary, and her word would go further than mine at any time. Thus were friar Chrysostom's savings transferred from one thief to a greater thief in the thief-taker.

I wept over the loss of my money, as a father over the death of his only son: and though my tears could not bring back what I had lost, they at least answered the purpose of exciting pity in some people, who saw how bitterly

ney flowed, and among others in the parson, who was ncidentally going by. He seemed affected by my sad ight, and took me home with him. There, to gain my nfidence, or rather to pump me, he began soothing my rrows. How much this poor child is to be pitied! said e. Is it any wonder if, thrown upon the wide world at tender an age, he has committed a bad action? Grown p men are not always proof against the flesh or the devil. hen, addressing me, Child, added he, from what part of pain do you come, and who are your parents? You ave the look of family about you. Open your heart to e confidentially, and depend upon it, I never will desert ou.

His reverence, by this kind and insinuating language, ngaged me by degrees to tell him all my history, without dsification or reserve. I owned everything; and thus he oralized on the leading article of my confession: My ttle friend, though hermits ought to lay up such treasures s neither force nor fraud can wrest from them, that was o excuse for your taking the measure of punishment to your own hands: by robbing brother Chrysostom, ou nevertheless sinned against that article of the deca- gue, which tells you not to steal; but I will engage o make the hostess return the money, and will punctually mit it to the reverend friar at his hermitage: you may herefore make your conscience perfectly easy on that core. Now, between ourselves, my conscience was per- ctly callous to everything like compunction with re- pect to the crime in question. The parson, who had is own ends to answer, had not done with me yet. My d, pursued he, I mean to take you by the hand, and find good berth for you. I shall send you to-morrow morn- g, by the carrier, to my nephew, a canon of Toledo. e will not refuse, at my request, to admit you upon his tablishment, where they live like so many sons of the urch, rosily, merrily, and fatly, upon the rents of his pre- ndal stall: you will be perfectly comfortable there, take y word for it.

Patronage like this gave me so much encouragement, that did not throw away another thought either upon my bag my whipping. My mind was wholly occupied with the ea of living rosily, merrily, and fatly, like a son of the

church. The following day, at breakfast-time, there came, according to orders, a muleteer to the parsonage, with two mules saddled and bridled. They helped me to mount one, the muleteer flung his leg over the other, and we trotted on for Toledo. My fellow-traveller was a good, pleasant companion, and desired nothing better than to indulge his humour at the expense of his neighbour. My little volunteer, said he, you have a good friend in his reverence, the minister of Galves. He could not give you a better proof of his kindness, than by placing you with his nephew the canon, whom I have the honour of knowing, far beyond all question or comparison, to be the cock of the chapter, and a hearty one he is. None of your lantern-jawed saints, with Lent in his face, a cat-of-nine-tails on his back, and a cholera morbus in his belly. No such thing! Our doctor is rubicund in the jowl, efflorescent on the nose, with a wicked eye at a bumper or a girl; militant against no earthly pleasure, but most addicted to the good things of the table. You will be as snug there as a bug in a blanket.

This hangman of a muleteer, perceiving with what exquisite satisfaction I took in all this, went on tantalizing me with the joys of an ecclesiastical life. He never dropped the subject till we got to the village of Obisa, and stopped there to refresh our mules. Then, while bustling about the inn, he accidentally dropped a paper from his pocket, which I was cunning enough to pick up without his seeing me, and took an opportunity of reading while he was in the stable. It was a letter addressed to the governors and superintendents of the orphan school, conceived in these terms: "Gentlemen, I consider it as an act at once of charity and of duty, to send you back a little truant; he seems a shrewd lad enough, and may do very well with good looking after. By dint of hard and frequent chastisement, I doubt not but you will ultimately bring him to a sense of his own unworthiness and your benevolence. May a blessing be vouchsafed on your pious and charitable labours, for the early extirpation of sin and wickedness!

(Signed) "THE MINISTER OF GALVES."

When I had finished reading this pleasant letter, which let me into the good intentions of his reverence the rector, it required little deliberation to determine what I was to do:

from the inn to the banks of the Tagus, a space of three good miles, was but a hop, step, and jump. Fear lent me wings to escape from the governors of the foundling hospital, whither I was absolutely resolved never to return, having formed principles of taste diametrically opposite to their method of teaching the classics. I went into Toledo with as light a heart as if I had known where to get my daily bread. To be sure, it is a town of ways and means, where a man who can live by his wits need never die of hunger. Scarcely had I reached the high street, when a well-dressed gentleman by whom I brushed, caught me by the arm, saying: My little fellow, do you want a place? You are just such a smart lad as I was looking for. And you are just the master for my money, answered I. Since that is the case, rejoined he, you are mine from this moment, and have only to follow me, which I did without asking any more questions.

This spark, about the age of thirty, and bearing the name of Don Abel, lodged in very handsome ready-furnished apartments. He was by profession a blacklegs; and the following was the nature of our engagement. In the morning I got him as much tobacco as would smoke five or six pipes; brushed his clothes, and ran for a barber to shave him and trim his whiskers; after which he made the circle of the tennis-courts, whence he never returned home till eleven or twelve at night. But every morning, at going out, he gave me three reals for the expenses of the day, leaving me master of my own time till ten o'clock in the evening; and provided I was within-doors by his return, all was well. He gave me a livery besides, in which I looked like a little lackey of illicit love. I took very kindly to my condition, and certainly could not have met with any more congenial with my temper.

Such and so happy had been my way of life for nearly a month, when my employer inquired whether I liked his service; and on my answer in the affirmative, Well, then, resumed he, to-morrow we shall set out for Seville, whither my concerns call me. You will not be sorry to see the capital of Andalusia. "He that hath not Seville seen," says the proverb, "Is no traveller I ween." I engaged at once to follow him all over the world. On that very day, the Seville carrier fetched away a large trunk with my

master's wardrobe, and on the next morning we were o the road for Andalusia.

Signor Don Abel was so lucky at play, that he neve lost but when it was convenient; but then it was seldo convenient to stay long in a place, because those who a always losers find out at last, that though chance is a dan gerous antagonist, certainly it is a desperate one; and tha accounted for our journey. On our arrival at Seville, w took lodgings near the Cordova gate, and resumed the sam mode of life as at Toledo. But my master found som difference between the two towns. The Seville tennis courts could produce players equally in fortune's goo graces with himself; so that he sometimes came home good deal out of humour. One morning, when he wa biting the bridle for the loss of a hundred pistoles the da before, he asked why I had not carried his linen to th laundress. I pleaded forgetfulness. Thereupon, flying into a passion, he gave me half-a-dozen boxes on the ear in such a style, as to kindle an illumination in my blinking eyes, to which the glories of Solomon's temple were no more to be compared, than the torches in a Candlemas procession to a rush-light. There is for you, you little scoundrel! said he; take that, and learn to mind your business. Must I be eternally at your heels to remind you of what you are to do? Are your brains in your belly, and all your wits in your grinders? You are not a downright idiot! Then why not prevent my wants and anticipate my orders? After this experimental lecture, he went out for the day, leaving me in high dudgeon, at a reprimand so much in the manner of my friend the ostler, for such a trifle as not getting up his things for the wash.

I could never learn what happened to him a short time after at a tennis-court; but one evening he came home in a terrible heat. Scipio, said he, I am bent on going to Italy, and must embark the day after to-morrow on board a vessel bound for Genoa. I have my reasons for making this little excursion; of course you will be glad to attend me, and to profit by so fine an opportunity of seeing the loveliest country on the face of the earth. My tongue gave consent; but with a salvo in my heart and a bargain with my revenge, to give him the slip just at the moment of embarkation. This was so delightful a scheme, that I

could not help imparting it to a bully by profession, whom I met in the street. During my abode in Seville, I had picked up some awkward acquaintance, and this was one of the most ungainly. I told him how and why my ears had been boxed, and then communicated my project of running away from Don Abel just before the ship was to sail, begging to know what he thought of the plan.

My bluff adviser puckered his eyebrows while he listened, and fiddled with his fingers about his whiskers: then, blaming my master very seriously, My little hero, said he, you are eternally disgraced, can never shew your face again, if you sit down quietly with so paltry a satisfaction as what you propose. To let Don Abel go off by himself, would be a poor revenge for wrongs like yours; the punishment should be proportioned to his crime. Let us fine him to the full amount of his purse and effects, which we will share like brothers after he is gone. Now it is to be noted, that though thieving fell in very naturally with the bent of my genius, the proposal rather startled me, as the robbery was upon a large scale for so young an apprentice.

And yet the arch deceiver of my innocence found the means of working me up to the perpetration, so that the result of our enterprise was as follows. This glorious ruffian, a tall, brawny fellow, came in the evening about twilight to our lodging. I shewed my master's travelling trunk ready packed, and asked him whether he could carry so heavy a load upon his shoulders. So heavy as that! said he: shew me where a transfer of property is to be made in my favour, and I could run with Noah's ark to the top of mount Ararat. To prove his words, he felt the trunk, flung it carelessly over his back, and scampered down-stairs. I followed nimbly; and we had just got to the street door, when Don Abel, brought home in the nick of time by the ascendancy of his lucky stars, stood like an apparition, to appal our guilty souls.

Whither are you going with that trunk? said he. I was so taken by surprise that my assurance failed me; and broad-shoulders, finding that he had drawn a blank in the lottery, threw down his booty, and took to his heels, rather than be troubled for an explanation. Once more, whither are you going with that trunk? said my master. Sir, answered I, with all the honest simplicity of a criminal,

pleading in arrest of judgment, I was going to put it on board the vessel, that we might have the less to do to-morrow, before we embark ourselves. Indeed! Then you know, retorted he, in what ship I have taken my passage? No, sir, replied I! but those who can talk Latin may always find their way to Rome: I should have inquired at the port, and somebody would have informed me. At this explanation, which left his opinion where it found it, he darted a furious glance at me. I thought for all the world, he was going to cuff me again about the head. Who ordered you, cried he, to take my trunk out of this house? You, your own self, said I. Can you possibly have forgotten how you rated me but a few days ago? Did you not tell me, with a flea in my ear, that you would have me prevent your wants, and do beforehand from my own head whatever your service might require? Now, not to be threshed a second time for want of forethought, I was seeing your trunk safe and soon enough on board. On this the gamester, finding that I had cut my teeth of wisdom sooner than suited his purpose, turned me off very coolly, saying: Go about your business, master Scipio, and speed as you may deserve. I do not like to play with folks who are in the habit of revoking. Get out of my sight, or I shall set your *solfeggio* in a crying key.

I spared him the trouble of telling me to go twice. Off I shot like an arrow, for fear he should unfledge me, by taking away my livery. When distant enough to slacken my pace, I walked along in the streets, musing whither I might betake myself for a night's lodging, with only two reals in my pocket. The gate of the archbishop's palace at length stared me in the face; and, as his grace's supper was then dressing, a savoury odour exhaled from the kitchens, impregnating the gale with soup and sauce for a mile round. Ods haricots and cutlets! thought I, it would be no hard matter for me to dispense with one of those little side dishes, which will be of no use to the archbishop but to make out the figure of his table: nay, I would be contented only just to dip in my four fingers and thumb, and then to sup like a bear upon suckings. But how to accomplish it! Is there no way of bringing these choice morsels to a better test than that of smell? And why not? Hunger, they say, will break through stone walls.

On this idea did I set my wits to work; and, by dint of conning over the subject, a stratagem struck me, which set my lungs as well as appetite in motion, just as the old carpenter kept bawling, "I have found it," like a madman, when he had hit the right nail of his proposition on the head. I ran into the court of the palace, and made the best of my way to the kitchens, calling out with all my might, "Help! help!" as if some assassin had been at my heels.

At my reiterated cries master Diego, the archbishop's cook, ran with three or four kitchen drudges to learn what was the matter; and seeing only me, asked why I roared so loud. Ah! good sir, answered I, with every token of exquisite distress, for mercy's sake and for St Polycarp's! save me, I beseech you, from the fury of a blusterer, who swears he will kill me. But where is the disturber of the public peace? cried Diego. You have no one to quarrel with but yourself; for I do not see so much as a cat to spit at you. Go your ways, my little man, and do not be afraid; it is evidently some wag who has been playing upon your cowardice for his diversion; but he knew better than to follow you within these walls, for we would have cut his ears off at the least. No, no, said I, it was for no laughing matter that he ran after me. He is a noted footpad, and meant to rob me; I am certain that he is now waiting for me at the corner of the street. Then he may wait long enough, replied the knight of the iron spit; for you shall stay here till to-morrow. You shall sup with us, and we will give you a bed.

I was out of my little wits with joy at the mention of these last tidings; and it was like the turnpike road to paradise after crossing an Arabian desert, when being led by master Diego through the kitchens, I there saw my lord archbishop's supper, and the stew-pans in the last throes of parturition. There were fifteen accountable souls, for I reckoned them up, in attendance on the labour; but the litter of dishes far out-numbered the fecundity of nature in her most prolific mood: so much more gracious and bountiful is providence to the heads of the church in the indulgence of their appetites, than mindful of the worthless brute creation in the propagation of its kind. Here it was, at the fountain-head of prelacy, inhaling an atmo-

sphere of gravy, instead of just snuffing the scent as it lay upon the breeze, that I first shook hands with sensuality. I had the honour of supping with the scullions, and of sleeping in their room; an initiation of friendship so sincere and strong, that on the following day, when I went to thank master Diego for his goodness in vouchsafing me a refuge, he said: Our kitchen lads have been with me in a body, to declare how excessively delighted they are with your manners, and to propose having you among them as a fellow-servant. How should you, on your part, like to make one of the society? I answered that, with such a feather in my cap, I should be the vainest and the happiest of mortals. Then so be it, my friend, replied he; consider yourself henceforth as a buttress of the hierarchy. With this invitation, he introduced me to the major-domo, who thought he saw talent enough in me for a turnspit.

No sooner was I in possession of so honourable an office, than master Diego, following the practice of cooks in great houses, who pamper up their pretty dears in private with all sorts of good things, selected me to supply a lady in the neighbourhood with a regular table of butcher's meat, poultry, and game. This good friend of his was a widow on the right side of thirty, very pretty, very lively, and to all appearance contenting herself with cupboard love for her cook. His generous passion was not confined to furnishing her with bread, meat, and garnish; she drank her wine too, and the archbishop was her wine-merchant.

The improvement of my parts kept pace with that of my carnal condition in his grace's palace: where I gave a specimen of rising genius, still ringing on the trump of fame at Seville. The pages and some others of the household had a mind to get up a play on my lord archbishop's birthday. They chose a popular Spanish tragedy; and wanting a boy about my age to personate the young King of Leon, cast me for the part. The major-domo, a great spouter, undertook to train me for the stage; and after a few lessons, pronounced that I should not be the worst actor of the company. His grace not wishing to starve so handsome a compliment to himself, no expense was spared in getting it up magnificently. The largest hall in the palace was fitted up as a theatre, with appropriate decorations. At the side scene there was a bed of turf, on which

I was to be discovered asleep, when the Moors were to rush in and take me prisoner. When we had got so forward with our rehearsals as to be sure of being ready by the time fixed, the archbishop sent out cards of invitation to all the principal families in the city.

At length the great, the important day arrived; and each performer was big with the contrivance and adjustment of his dress. Mine was brought by a tailor, accompanied by our major-domo, who, after taking the trouble of drilling me at rehearsal, wished to see justice done to my outward appearance. The tailor put me on a rich robe of blue velvet, with hanging sleeves, gold lace, fringe, and buttons: the major-domo himself crowned me with a pasteboard crown, studded with false diamonds and real pearls. Moreover, they gave me a sash of pink silk worked in silver; so that every new ornament was like a quill-feather in the wing of a bird. At last, about dusk, the play began. The curtain drew up for my soliloquy; the purport of which was to express, in a roundabout, poetical way, that not being able to defend myself from the influence of sleep, I was going to lie down and take it as it came. To suit the action to the word, I sidled off to the corner between the flat and the wings, and squatted down on my bed of turf, but instead of going to sleep, according to promise, I was hammering upon the means of getting into the street, and running away with my coronation finery. A little private staircase, leading under the theatre into the lower saloon, seemed to furnish the probability of success. I slid away slily, while the audience were considering some necessary question of the play, and ran down the staircase, through the saloon, to the door, calling out, "Make way! make way! I must change my dress, and run up again in a moment!" They all made a lane, for fear of hindering me; so that in less than two minutes I got clear of the palace, under cover of the darkness, and scampered to the house of my friend who saw gentlemen's trunks safe on board.

He stared like a stuck pig at my equipment! But when I let him into the why and the wherefore, he laughed ready to split his sides. Then, shaking hands in the sincerity of his heart, because he flattered himself with the hope of a pension on the King of Leon's civil list, he wished me joy

of so successful a first appearance, and joined issue with the major-domo in the prognostic, that with encouragement and practice I should turn out a first-rate actor, and make no little noise in the world. After we had diverted ourselves for some time at the expense of my manager and audience, I said to the bully—What shall we do with this magnificent dress? Do not make yourself uneasy about that, answered he. I know an honest broker, without an atom of curiosity in his composition, who will buy or sell anything with any person, provided that he gets the turn of the market upon the transaction. I will fetch him to you to-morrow morning. The knowing fellow was as good as his word; for he went out early the next day, leaving me in bed, and returned two hours afterwards with the broker, carrying a yellow bundle under his arm. My friend, said he, give me leave to introduce Signor Ybagnez of Segovia, who, in spite of the bad example set him by the trade in general, trusts to fair dealing and small profits for a moderate pittance and an unblemished character. He will tell you to a fraction what the dress you want to part with is really worth, and you may take his calculation as the balance of justice, between man and man. Oh yes! to a nicety, said the broker. Else wherefore live I in a Christian land, but to appraise for my neighbour as for myself? To take a mean advantage never was, thank heaven! and at these years never shall be, imputed to Ybagnez of Segovia. Let us look a little at those articles! You are the seller; I am the buyer! We have only to agree upon an equitable price. Here they are, said the bully, pulling them out: now own the truth, was there ever anything more magnificent? You do not often see such velvet: and then the trimming! You cannot say too much of it, answered the salesman, examining the suit with the prying eye of a dealer, it is of the very first quality. And what think you of the pearls upon this crown? resumed my friend. A little rounder, observed Ybagnez, and there would be no setting a price upon them! however, take them as they are, it is a very fine set, and I do not want to find fault about trifles. Now your common run of appraisers, under my circumstances, would affect to disparage the goods for the sake of getting them cheaper; one of those fellows would have the conscience to offer twenty pistoles; but there is nothing like bargaining

with an upright, downright man! I will give forty at a word; take them or leave them!

Had Ybagnez ventured up to a hundred, he would not have burned his fingers; for the pearls alone would have fetched two hundred anywhere. The bully, who went snacks, then said—Now only look! what a mercy it is, to fall into the hands of a man not of this world. Signor Ybagnez estimates money as dross, in comparison of his principles and his soul. He may die to-night, and yet not be taken unprepared! That is too much! You make me blush, said the salesman of principle and soul; but so far is true, that my price is always fixed. Well, now, is it a bargain? The money down upon the nail too! Stop a moment! answered the bully; my little friend must first try on the clothes you have brought for him by my order: I am very much mistaken if they will not just fit him. The salesman then, untying his bundle, shewed me a second-hand suit of dark cloth with silver buttons. I got up, and got into it; too big for me every way! but these gentlemen could have sworn it had been made to my measure. Ybagnez put it at ten pistoles; and as he was an upright, downright man, of fixed principle and soul, estimating money as dross in comparison of integrity, his first price was of course his last. He therefore took out his purse, and counted down thirty pistoles upon a table; after which he packed up the King of Leon's regalia, and went his way.

When he was gone, the bully said—I am very well satisfied with that broker. And so he well might be; for I am certain he must have received at least a hundred pistoles as hush-money. But there was no reason why the broker's benevolence should pay the debts of my gratitude: so he took half the money on the table, without saying with your leave or by your leave, and suffered me to pocket the remainder, with the following advice: My dear Scipio, with that balance of fifteen pistoles, I would have you get out of this town as fast as you can; for you may suppose that my lord archbishop will ferret you out if you are above-ground. It would grieve me to the heart if, after having risen so superior to the prejudice of honesty, you had the weakness to fall foul of what alone keeps it afloat, the house of correction. I answered that it was my fixed purpose to make myself scarce at Seville, and accordingly,

after buying a hat and some shirts, I travelled through vineyards and olive groves to the ancient city of Carmona, and in three days afterwards arrived at Cordova.

I put up at an inn close by the market-place, giving myself out for the heir of a good family at Toledo, travelling for his pleasure. My appearance did not belie the story, and a few pistoles, which I contrived carelessly to chink within the landlord's hearing, pinned his faith upon my veracity. Probably my unfledged youth might lead him to take me for some graceless little truant who had robbed his parents and run away. But that was no concern of his: he took the thing just as I gave it him, for fear lest his curiosity should clash with my continuance at his house. For six reals a day one could live like a gentleman at this inn, where there was generally a considerable concourse of company. About a dozen people sat down at supper. It was whimsical enough; but the whole party plied their knives and forks without speaking a word, except one man, who talked incessantly, right or wrong, and made up for the silence of the rest by his eternal babble. He affected to be a wit, to tell a good story, and took great pains to make the good folks merry by his puns; and accordingly they did laugh most inextinguishably; but it was at him, not with him.

For my part, I paid so little attention to the talk of this rattle, that I should have got up from table without knowing what it was all about, if he had not brought it home to my business and my bosom. Gentlemen, cried he, just as supper was over, I have kept back my best story for the last; a very droll thing happened within these few days at the archbishop of Seville's palace. I had it from a young fellow of my acquaintance, who assures me that he was present at the time. These words made my heart jump up into my throat, for I had no doubt of this being my exploit —and so it turned out. This pleasant gentleman related the facts as they actually happened, and even carried the adventure to its conclusion, of which I was as yet ignorant: but now you shall be made as wise as myself.

No sooner had I absconded, than the Moors, who were, according to the progress of the fable and the rising of the interest, to lay violent hands on me, appeared upon the stage, for the fell purpose of surprising me on my bed of

turf, where the author had given them reason to expect me fast asleep; but when they thought they were just going to trapot the King of Leon, they found, to their surprise, that both the king and the knave made a trick against them. Here was a hole in the ballad! The actors all lost their cue; some of them called me by name, others ran to look for me; here is a fellow bawling as though his bellows would burst, there stands another, muttering to himself about the devil, just as if that reptile could stand upright in such a presence! The archbishop, perceiving trouble and confusion to lord it behind the scenes, asked what was the matter. At the sound of the prelate's voice, a page, who was the fiddle of the piece, came to the front and spoke thus: My lord archbishop, ladies, and gentlemen! We are extremely sorry to inform you, as players, but extremely glad, as men and Christians, that the King of Leon is at present in no danger whatever of being taken prisoner by the Moors: he has adopted effectual measures for the security of his royal person; and to the royal person, as liberty avails little without property, he has irrevocably attached the crown, insignia, and robes. And a happy deliverance for himself and Christendom! exclaimed the archbishop. He has done perfectly right to escape from the enemies of our religion, and to burst from the bonds in which their malice would have laid him. By this time, probably, he has reached the confines of his kingdom, or may have entered the capital. May no unlucky accident have retarded him on his journey! And that the sin of none such may lie heavy on my conscience, I beg leave very positively to make my pleasure known, that he may proceed unmolested by any interruption from this quarter; I should be highly mortified indeed, if his majesty's pious endeavours were to be frustrated by the slightest indignity from the ministers of that religion in whose cause he labours and suffers. The prelate, having thus declared his acquiescence in the motives of my flight, ordered my part to be read, and the play to be resumed.

CHAPTER XI

CONTINUATION OF SCIPIO'S STORY

As long as I had money in my purse, my landlord was cap in hand; but the moment he began to suspect that the funds were low, he became high and mighty, picked a German quarrel with me, and one morning, before breakfast, begged it as a favour of me to march out of his house. I followed his counsel as proudly as you please, and betook me to a church belonging to the fathers of St Dominic, where, while mass was performing, an old beggar accosted me on the usual topic of alms. I dropped some small change into his hat, which was truly the orphan's mite, saying at the same time: My friend, remember in your prayers to mention a situation for me; if your petition is heard with favour, it shall be all the better for you; hearty thanks, and a handsome poundage!

At these words, the beggar surveyed me up and down from head to foot, and answered in a grave tone: What place would you wish to have? I should like, replied I, to be footman in some family where I should do well. He inquired whether the matter pressed. With all possible importunity, said I, for unless I have the good luck to get settled very soon, the alternative will be horrible; death by the gripe of absolute famine, or a livelihood in the ranks of your fraternity. If the latter were, after all, to be your lot, resumed he, it certainly would be rather hard upon you, who have not been brought up to our habits of life; but, with a little use and practice, you would prefer our condition to service, which, partiality apart, is far less respectable than the beggar's vocation. Nevertheless, since you like a menial occupation better than leading a free and independent life like me, you shall have a berth without more ado. Mean as my appearance is, you must not measure my power by it. Meet me here at the same hour tomorrow.

I took care to keep the appointment. Though at the spot before the time, I had not long to wait before the beggar joined me, and told me to follow him. I did so. He led me to a cellar not far from the church where he

resided. We went in together; and sitting down on a long bench, at least a hundred years the worse for wear, the conversation took this turn on his part: A good action, as the proverb says, always meets with its reward: you gave me alms yesterday, and that has determined me to get you a place, which shall be soon done, with a blessing on my endeavours. I know an old Dominican, by name Father Alexis, a holy monk, a ghostly confessor. I have the honour to do all his little odd jobs, performing my task with so much discretion and good faith, that he always lends his interest to me and my friends. I have spoken to him about you, and in such terms as to prepossess him in your favour. You may be introduced to his reverence whenever you please.

There is not a moment to be lost, said I to the old beggar; let us go to the good monk immediately. The mendicant agreed, and led me by the arm to Father Alexis, whom we found in his room, hard at work, writing spiritual letters. He broke off to talk with me. As it was the wish of the mendicant, he would do all in his power to serve me. Having learnt, pursued he, that Signor Balthasar Velasquez is in want of a footboy, I wrote to him this morning on your behalf, and he just sent me for answer, that he would take you without further inquiry on my recommendation. This very day you may call on him from me; he is one of my flock, and my very good friend. Thereupon the monk preached to me for three quarters of an hour on my moral and religious duties, and how to fulfil them in conscience and honour. He enlarged principally on the obligation of serving Velasquez with diligence and devotion; and then assured me that he would take care and keep me in my place, provided my master had no very material fault to find with me.

After having thanked the holy person for his goodness towards me, I left the convent with the beggar, who told me that Signor Balthasar Velasquez was an old woollen-draper, but with much simplicity and good nature in his character. I doubt not, added he, but you will be perfectly comfortable in his house. I begged to know his place of residence, and repaired thither immediately, after promising to make my gratitude manifest, as soon as I had taken root in my new soil. I went into a large shop, where

two fashionable young apprentices were walking up and down, practising new grimaces against the entrance of the next customer. I inquired whether their master was at home, saying that I wanted to speak with him from Father Alexis. At that venerable name they shewed me into the counting-house, where their principal was turning over the ledger. I made a low bow, and coming up to him, Sir, said I, Father Alexis ordered me to call here and offer myself as a servant to your honour. Ah! my smart lad, answered he, you are heartily welcome. It is enough that the holy man sent you; and I shall take you in preference to three or four others who have been recommended. It is a clear case; your wages begin from this day.

A very short time in the family convinced me that the head of it was just such a man as he had been described. In point of simplicity, he was everything that could be wished; so exquisite a subject for imposition, that it seemed next to an impossibility not to exercise my craft upon such a handle. He had been a widower four years, and had two children, a son five-and-twenty, and a daughter in her eleventh year. The girl, brought up by a severe duenna, under the spiritual conduct of Father Alexis, walked in the high road of virtue; but her brother, Gaspard Velasquez, though no pains had been spared to make a good man of him, picked out for himself all the vices of a young profligate. Sometimes he stayed away from home two or three days together; and if, on his return, his father ventured to remonstrate in the least against his proceedings, Gaspard shut his mouth at once, with a haughty toss of the head, and an impertinent answer.

Scipio, said the old man one day, my son is the plague of my life. He is over head and ears in all kinds of debauchery: and yet there is no accounting for it, since his education was by no means neglected. I have given him the very best masters; and my friend Father Alexis has done his utmost to train him up in the way he should go; but there was no breaking him in; Master Gaspard ran restive, and bolted into downright libertinism. You may perhaps tell me, that I spared the rod and spoiled the child. Quite otherwise! he was punished whenever the occasion seemed to demand it; for, though good-tempered at bottom, I am not to be played upon. I have even gone so far

us to lock him up, but that only made him more headstrong than before. In short, he is one of those impracticable beings, on whom good example, good advice, and a good horsewhip, are equally thrown away. If ever he makes any figure in the world, it must be by a miracle from heaven.

Though my heart was not grievously wrung by the sorrows of this unhappy father, sympathy was expected from me, and I condoled with him accordingly. How much to be pitied you are, sir! said I. Virtues like yours deserved to have been handed down in your progeny. The event is quite the reverse, my good lad, answered he. Heaven heard my prayer, and gave me a son, but converted the blessing into an affliction. Among other grounds of complaint against Gaspard, I may tell you in confidence, there is one which gives me a great deal of uneasiness; a vast longing to rob his old father, which he too often finds the means of satisfying, in spite of all my caution. Your predecessor played into his hands, and was turned away in consequence. As for you, I flatter myself that my son will never be able to tamper with your honesty. You will take my side of the question; for doubtless Father Alexis has given you your lesson on that head. You may rest assured of that, said I; for a good long hour did his reverence lecture me on doing your will and pleasure without let or hindrance; but I can assure you, there was no need of his saying anything about the matter. I feel within myself a sort of call to serve you faithfully, and I promise to do it with a zeal beyond all the temptations of the world to shake or lessen.

He who only hears one side is in danger of deciding partially. Young Velasquez, a mixture of the fribble and the braggart, concluding from the cut of my countenance that I was made up of mortal frailty like my dear predecessor, drew me aside to a snug corner, and there talked to me after this fashion. Now mind what is said to you, my dear fellow; you may think I do not know that you are set as a spy upon me by my father; but take especial care how you proceed, for I can assure you most sincerely, that the office is not without very considerable inconvenience to those who undertake it. If ever I find that you tell tales out of school, I will give you such a basting as you never

had in your life; but if you will make common cause with me, and a fool of my father, you may buy golden returns of gratitude from your humble servant. Do you wish me to deal with you upon the nail? You shall go snacks in all that we can squeeze out of the old fellow. You have only to take your choice: fall at once into the ranks either of father or son; for neutrals will come worst off, where the contending parties fight for their existence.

Sir, answered I, you make the shoe pinch very tight; it is self-evident that there is nothing for me to do but to enlist under your banners, though in my conscience it seems like a crying sin to betray Signor Velasquez. That is no concern of yours, rejoined Gaspard; he is an old hunks, who wants to keep me under this thumb; a curmudgeon who refuses me the rights of nature, in refusing to stand to the expenses and repairs of my pleasures; for pleasures are the necessaries of life at five-and-twenty. It is in this point of view that you must form your opinion of my father. If that is the case, so be it, sir, said I; there is no standing against so just a subject of complaint. I am quite at your service to play second fiddle in all your laudable enterprises; but let us take especial care to conceal our good understanding, for fear your faithful, humble servant should be kicked out of doors. It will not be amiss, in my poor opinion, for you to affect an extreme antipathy against me: some good round of abuse would have a very pretty effect; you need not be nice; all the blackguard terms in the dictionary will come at your call. Nay, a box on the ear now and then, or a kick on the breech, will break no squares; on the contrary, the more you express your thorough dislike, the more Signor Balthasar will pin his faith upon my sleeve. My cue will be, apparently to avoid speaking to you if possible. In waiting at table, I shall perform my little attentions to you at arm's length; and whenever your honour may happen to be called over the coals by the shopmen, you must not take it amiss if I abuse you worse than a pickpocket.

As plain as chalk from cheese! cried young Velasquez at this last hint; this is admirable, my friend; at your early age, it is uncommon to meet with such a talent for intrigue; I consider it as a most happy omen for my purpose. With such a performer to play up to me, I flatter

myself the old codger will be pinched to the bone and left penniless. You really carry your good opinion of me beyond what my merit will justify, said I; some industry may fall to my share, but not such exalted genius. But I shall do my utmost; and if my honest endeavours fail, your candour must find excuses for my imbecility.

It was not long before Gaspard had proof positive that I was to a hair's breadth the very man he wanted; and the following was precisely the first trick I played into his hand. Balthasar's strong box was in the good man's chamber, by his bed-side, a sort of oratory, with a prayer-book always lying upon it. Every time I looked that way, my eyes glistened with hope and pleasure; my heart chuckled over the very idea of what might happen: Fair, sweet, cruel box, will you for ever be coy to my addresses? May I never experience the heart-felt delight of possessing all your charms for better, for worse? As I went into the room at pleasure, and only Gaspard was warned off the premises, it happened one day that I watched his father. The old gentleman, fancying himself unobserved of human eye, after having opened his treasury and closed it fast again, hid the key behind the hangings. I took an accurate observation of the place, and communicated the discovery to my young master, who said with an improving hug: Ah! my dear Scipio, what glorious news you bring! Our fortune is made, my dear fellow. I will furnish you with wax; you shall take the impression of the key, and then our business is done. There will be no difficulty in finding a benevolent locksmith in Cordova, where, to do the place justice, there are as many rogues as in any part of Spain.

Well! but why, said I to Gaspard, do you want a false key? We may find our account in the proper one. Yes, answered he; but I am afraid lest my father, through mistrust or whim, should take a fancy to hiding it elsewhere; and the safest way is, to have one of our own. I commended his precaution, and falling in with all his principles, got ready for taking the impression of the key: this was effected one morning early, while my old master was paying a visit to Father Alexis, with whom he for the most part held very long conferences. I did not stop here; but availed myself of the key to open the strong box, wherein an ample

range of large and small bags threw me into the most delightful perplexity imaginable. I did not know which to choose, there was such a family likeness among them; nevertheless, as the fear of being caught did not allow of any long deliberation, I laid hands, hap-hazard, on the largest. Then, locking the box carefully, and putting the key back again behind the hangings, I got away out of the chamber with my booty, and hid it under my bed, in a small closet where I lay.

Having performed this exploit so successfully, I ran back as fast as my legs would carry me to young Velasquez, who was waiting at a house where he had given me notice to meet him, and his delight was extreme at the recital of what I had just done. He was so fully satisfied with me, as to lavish caresses without number, and to offer me thrice, in the fulness of his heart, half the contents of the bag, which I did thrice refuse. No, no, sir, said I, this first bag is yours and yours only; apply it to your own uses and occasions. I shall return forthwith to the strong box, where, as our lucky stars have contrived it, there is money enough for both of us. Accordingly, three days afterwards I carried off a second bag, containing, like the first, five hundred crowns, of which I would only handle the fourth part, let Gaspard be as pressing as he pleased to force upon me a brotherly division, share and share alike.

As soon as this young man found himself so flush of money, and consequently in a condition to gratify his hankering after women and play, he gave himself up entirely to the devices of his own imagination; nay, his evil genius pursued him so far, as to make him fall desperately in love with one of those female harpies, who devour without remorse or intermission, and swallow up the largest fortunes. His disbursements at her instigation were frightful; and thus it became necessary for me to pay so many visits to the strong box, that old Velasquez at length found out he had been robbed. Scipio, said he one morning, I must give you a piece of information; some one robs me, my friend; my strong box has been opened; several bags have been taken out, that is a certain fact. Whom ought I to accuse of this theft? or rather, who else but my son can have committed it? Gaspard must have got by stealth into my chamber, or else you yourself must have played

booty with him; for I am tempted to believe you are in league with him, though to outward appearance you do not set up your horses together. And yet I am unwilling to harbour that suspicion, because Father Alexis undertook to answer for your honesty. I gave him to understand that, by the blessing of heaven on a good natural disposition, my neighbours' goods had no temptation in my sight; and I so happily suited the action to the lie, and the lie to the action, that my judge pronounced a verdict of acquittal on the evidence of grimace and hypocrisy.

Accordingly the old man dropped the subject; but for all that, there was a general misgiving in his breast, and it would sometimes light upon me; taking precautions, therefore, against our further attacks, he had a new lock put to his strong box, and always carried the key in his pocket. By these means, an embargo being laid on our traffic with the bags, we looked excessively foolish, especially Gaspard, who, being unable any longer to keep his nymph in her usual style, knew very well that he was likely to be tossed out of her window. He had, however, invention enough to devise an expedient for keeping his head above water a few days longer, and that was neither more nor less than to get into his clutches, in the form of a loan, my dividend on the joint stock of the strong box. I refunded to the last farthing; and this restitution, it is to be hoped, may be set off as an anticipated act of justice to the old draper, in the person of his heir.

The young man, having exhausted this scanty supply, and desperate of any other, fell into a deep melancholy, and into ultimate derangement. He no longer looked on his father in any other light than as the bane of his life. His frenzy broke out into the most dreadful projects; so that, without listening to the voice of consanguinity or nature, the wretch conceived the impious design of poisoning him. He was not content with making me privy to the atrocious design, but even proposed to render me the instrument of parricide. At the very thought, my blood ran cold within me. Sir, said I, is it possible that you are so rejected of heaven as to have formed this horrid plot? What! is it in your nature to murder the author of your existence? Shall Spain, the favoured abode of the Christian faith, bear witness to the commission of a crime, at the

first blush of which transatlantic savages would recoil with horror? No, my dear master, added I, throwing myself on my knees, no, you will not be guilty of an action which would raise the hand of all mankind against you, and be overtaken by an infamous punishment.

I pressed many arguments beside on Gaspard, to dissuade him from so fearful an enterprise. How the deuce I came by all the moral and religious topics, which I brought to act against the fortress of his despair, is more than I can account for; but it is certain that I preached like a doctor of Salamanca, though a mere stripling, born of a gipsy fortune-teller. And yet it was to no purpose that I suggested the duty of communing with his own better resolutions, and stoutly wrestling with the fiend, who was lying in wait for his immortal soul; my pious eloquence was dissipated into air. His head hung sullenly on his bosom, and his tongue uttered no sound, in answer to all my mollifying exhortations, so that there was every reason to conclude he would not swerve from his purpose.

Hereupon, taking my own measures, I requested a private interview with my old master; and being closeted with him, Sir, said I, allow me to throw myself at your feet, and to implore your pity. In pathetic accord with my moving accents, I prostrated myself before him, with my face all bathed in tears. The merchant, surprised at what he saw and heard, asked the cause of my distress. Remorse of conscience and repentance, answered I; but neither repentance nor remorse can ever wash out my guilt. I have been weak enough to give ear to your son, and to be his accomplice in robbing you. To this confession I added a sincere acknowledgment of all that had happened, with the particulars of my late conversation with Gaspard, whose design I laid open without the least reserve.

Bad as was the opinion which old Velasquez entertained of his son, he could scarcely believe his ears. Nevertheless, finding no good reason to distrust the truth of my account, Scipio, said he, raising me from the ground, where I had till now been prostrate at his feet, I forgive you in consideration of the important notice you have communicated. Gaspard! pursued he, raising his voice up to the loudness of anguish, does Gaspard aim a blow at my life!

Ah! ungrateful son, unnatural monster! better thou hadst never been born, or stifled at thy birth, than to have been reared for the destruction of thy father! What plea, what object, what palliation of the atrocious deed? I furnished thee annually with a reasonable allowance for thy pleasures, and what wouldst thou have more? Must I have drained my fortune to the dregs to support thee in thy extravagance? Having vented his feelings in this bitter apostrophe, he enjoined secresy on me, and told me to leave him alone, while he considered how to act in so delicate a conjuncture.

I was very anxious to know what resolution this unhappy father would take, when on that very day he sent for Gaspard, and addressed him thus without betraying the inward emotions of his heart: My son, I have received a letter from Merida, purporting that if you are disposed to marry, you may make a match with a very fine girl of fifteen, with a handsome fortune in her pocket. If you have not forsworn that happy and holy estate, we will set out tomorrow morning by daybreak for Merida: you will see the lady in question, and if she hits your fancy, the business may soon be settled. Gaspard, pricking up his ears at a handsome fortune, and already fingering the cash by anticipation, answered unhesitatingly that he was ready to undertake the journey; and accordingly they departed the following day at sun-rise, without attendants, mounted on good mules.

Having reached the mountains of Fesira, in a delightful spot for the operations of banditti, but terror-stirring to the timid souls of travellers, Balthasar dismounted, and desired his son to do likewise. The young man obeyed, but expressed his surprise at such a requisition, in so lonely a place. I will tell you the reason presently, answered the old man, darting at him a look of mingled grief and anger: We are not going to Merida; and the alleged courtship was only an invention of mine, for the purpose of drawing you hither. I am not ignorant, ungrateful and unnatural son, I am not uninformed of your meditated crime. I am aware that a poison, prepared by your hands, was to have been administered to me; but, mad as you are, could it enter into your contemplation that my life could have been invaded with impunity by such means? How fatally mis-

taken! Your crime would soon have been detected, and you would have perished under the hands of the executioner. There is a safer way of glutting your fell malice, without exposing yourself to an ignominious death; we are here without witnesses, and in a place where daily murders are perpetrated; since you are so thirsty after my blood, plunge your dagger into my bosom: the assassination will naturally be laid at the door of some banditti. After these words, Balthasar, laying his breast bare, and pointing to his heart, ended with this challenge: Here, Gaspard, strike deep enough, strike home; make me pay that forfeit for having engendered such a disgrace to human nature, and no more than what is due to so monstrous a production.

Young Velasquez, struck by this reproach as by a thunderbolt, far from pleading in his own justification, fell instantly lifeless at his father's feet. The good old man, hailing the germ of repentance in this unfeigned testimony of shame, could not help yielding to paternal weakness; he made all possible haste to give his assistance; but Gaspard had no sooner recovered the use of his senses, than unable to stand in the presence of a father so justly offended, he made an effort to raise himself from the ground, then sprang upon his mule, and galloped out of sight without saying one word. Balthasar suffered him to take his own course, and returned to Cordova, little doubting but conscience would play its part in revenging his wrongs. Six months afterwards it appeared that the culprit had thrown himself into the Carthusian convent at Seville, there to pass the remnant of his days in penance.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION OF SCIPIO'S STORY

Bad example sometimes produces the converse of itself. The behaviour of young Velasquez made me think seriously on my own predicament. I began to wrestle with my thievish propensities, and to live like one of the better sort. A confirmed habit of pouncing upon money wherever I could get it, had been contracted by such a long succession

of individual acts, that it was no easy matter to say where it should stop. And yet I was in hopes to accomplish my own reformation, under the idea that to become virtuous a man had nothing to do but to contract the desire of being so. I therefore undertook this great work, and heaven seemed to smile upon my efforts: I left off eyeing the old draper's strong box with the carnal regard of avaricious longing: nay, I verily believe, that if it had depended on my own will and pleasure to have turned over the contents to my own use, I should have abstained from the crime of picking and stealing. It must, however, be admitted, that it would have been an unadvisable measure to tempt my new-born integrity with meats too strong for its stomach: and Velasquez was nurse enough to keep me on a proper diet.

Don Manriquez de Medrano, a young gentleman, knight of Alcantara, was in the habit of coming backwards and forwards to our house. He was a customer, one of our principal in point of rank, if not punctual in point of pay. I had the happiness to find favour with this knight, who never met me without that sort of notice which encouraged conversation, and with that conversation he appeared always to be very much pleased. Scipio, said he, one day, if I had a footman of your kidney, it would be as good as a fortune to me, and if you were not in the service of a man who stands so high in my regards, I should make no scruple about enticing you away. Sir, answered I, you would have very little trouble in succeeding; for I am distractedly partial to people of fashion; it is my weak side; their free and easy manners fascinate me to the extreme of folly. That being the case, replied Don Manriquez, I will at once beg Signor Balthasar to turn you over from his household to mine: he will scarcely refuse me such a request. Accordingly Velasquez was kind and complying, with so much the less violence to his own private feelings, as there seemed no reason to think, that if a man parted with one knavish servant, he might not easily get another in his place. To me the change was all for the better, since a tradesman's service appeared but a beggarly condition in comparison with the office of own man to a knight of Alcantara.

To draw a faithful likeness of my new master, I must describe him as a gentleman possessing every requisite

of person, figure, manners, and disposition. Nor was that all; for his courage and honour were equal to his other qualities: the goods of fortune were the only good things he wanted, but being the younger son of a family more distinguished by descent than opulence, he was obliged to draw for his expenses on an old aunt living at Toledo, who loved him as her own child, and administered to his occasions with affectionate liberality. He was always well dressed, and everywhere well received. He visited the principal ladies in the city, and among others the Marchioness of Almenara. She was a widow of seventy-two, but the centre of attraction to all the fashionable society of Cordova, by the elegance of her manners and the sprightliness of her conversation: men as well as women laid themselves out for an introduction, because her parties conferred at once on the frequenters the patent of good company.

My master was one of that lady's most assiduous courtiers. After leaving her one evening, his spirits seemed to be more elevated than was natural to him. Sir, said I, you are evidently in a good deal of agitation; may your faithful servant ask on what account? Has anything happened out of the common way? The young gallant smiled at so home a question, and owned candidly that he had just been engaged in a serious conversation with the Marchioness of Almenara. I will lay a wager, said I, laughing outright, that this moppet of threescore and ten, this girl in her second childhood, has been unfolding to you all the secret movements of a tender, susceptible heart. Do not make a jest of it, answered he; for the fact is, my friend, that the Marchioness is seriously in love with me. She told me that the narrowness of my circumstances was as well known to her as the nobility of my birth; that she had taken a liking to me, and was determined to place me at my ease by marriage, since she could not decently lay her fortune at my feet on any other terms. That this marriage would expose her to public ridicule, she professed to have considered; that scandal would be busy at her expense; in short, that she should pass for an old fool with an ambitious eye and a liquorish constitution. No matter for that! She was not to be awed from the career of her humour by quips and sentences: her only alarm was,

lest I should either make sport of her intentions, or torment her more grievously by my aversion.

Such, continued the knight, was the substance of the Marchioness's declaration, and I am the more astonished at it, because she is the most prudent and sensible woman in Cordova; wherefore I answered by expressing my surprise at her honouring me with the offer of her hand, since she had hitherto persisted in her resolution of remaining in a state of widowhood. To this she replied, that having a considerable fortune, it would give her pleasure to share it in her life-time with a man of honour to whom she was attached. To all appearance then, rejoined I, you have made up your mind to take a lover's leap. Can you doubt about that? answered he. The Marchioness is immensely rich, with excellent qualities both of head and heart. It would be the extreme of folly and fastidiousness to let so advantageous a settlement slip through my fingers.

I entirely approved my master's purpose of profiting by so fine an opportunity to make his fortune, and even advised him to bring the matter to a short issue, for fear of a change in the wind. Happily the lady had the business more at heart than myself; her orders were given so effectually, that the necessary forms and ceremonies were soon got over. When it became known in Cordova that the old Marchioness of Almenara was getting herself ready to be the bride of young Don Manriquez de Medrano, the wits began breaking their odd quirks and remnants in derision of the widow; but though she heard her own detractions, she did not put them to mending; the town might talk as they pleased; for when she said she would die a widow, she did not think to live till she were married. The wedding was solemnized with a publicity and splendour which furnished fresh food for evil tongues. The bride, said they, might at least have had the modesty to dispense with noise and ostentation, so unbecoming in an old widow who marries a young husband.

The Marchioness, far enough from yielding to the suggestions of shame at her own inconsistency, or the disparity of their ages, yielded herself up without constraint to the expression of the most lively joy. She gave a grand concert and supper, with a ball afterwards, and invited all the principal families in Cordova. Just before the

close of the ball, the new-married couple disappeared, and were shewn to an apartment, where, with no other witnesses but her own maid and myself, she spoke to my master in these terms:—Don Manriquez, this is your apartment; mine is in another part of the house: we will pass the night in separate rooms, and will live together by day like mother and son. At first the knight did not know what to make of this; he thought that the lady was only trying his temper, as if her coldness must be wooed to kindness, and her love, like her pardon, not unsought, be won. Imagining, therefore, that good manners required, at least, the shew of passion, he made his advances, and offered, according to the laws of amorous suit enacted in such cases, to assist in the disencumbering duties of her toilet; but, so far from allowing him to interfere with the province of her servant, she pushed him back with a serious air, saying: Hold, Don Manriquez; if you take me for one of those sweet-toothed old women who marry a second time from mere incontinence, you do me a manifest injustice: my proposals were not fraught with conditions of hard service as the tenure of our nuptial contract; the gift of my heart was unmixed with sensual dross, and your gratitude is only drawn upon for returns of pure and platonic friendship. After this explanation, she left my master and me in our apartment, and withdrew to her own with her attendant, forbidding the bridegroom, in the most positive manner, to attempt retiring with her.

After her departure, it was some time before we recovered from our surprise at what we had just heard. Scipio, said my master, could you ever have believed that the Marchioness would have talked in such a strain? What think you of so philosophic a bride? I think, sir, answered I, that she is a phenix among the brood of Hymen. It is for all the world like a good living without parochial duties. For my part, replied Don Manriquez, there is nothing so much to my taste as a wife of modest pretensions; and I mean to make her amends for the trophy she has raised to unadulterated esteem, by all the delicate attentions in my power to pay. We kept up the subject of the lady's moderation till it was full time to separate. My quarters were in an ante-room with a book-case bedstead; my master's in an elegant bed-

chamber with every appurtenance except one: but however necessary it might be to play the disappointed bridegroom, I am much mistaken if in the bottom of his soul he was half so much afraid of sleeping by himself as of being encumbered with a bed-fellow.

The rejoicings began again on the following day, and the bride was so jocund on the occasion, that the bolts of the fools among her visitors were not soon shot. She was the first to laugh at all their pointless jokes; nay, she even set the little wits to work, by giving them an example of pleasantry, which they were very little able to follow. The happy man, on his part, seemed to be very little less happy than his partner; and one would have sworn, judging by the glance of satisfaction which accompanied his language and deportment, that he liked mutton better than lamb. This well-matched pair had a second conversation in the evening; and then it was decided that without interfering in the least with one another, they should live together just on the same footing as they had lived before marriage. At all events, much credit must be given to Don Manriquez on one account: he did, from delicate consideration towards his wife, what few husbands would have done under his circumstances, for he discarded a little sempstress of whom he was very fond, and who was very fond of him, because he did not choose to keep up a connection insulting to the feelings of a lady so studious of his.

While he was furnishing such unusual testimonies of gratitude to his elderly benefactress, she over paid and doubly paid her debt of obligation, even without diving into its nature or extent. She gave him the master key of her strong box, which was better provided than that of Velasquez. Though she had reduced her establishment during widowhood, it was now replaced upon the same footing as in the lifetime of her first husband; the complement of household servants was enlarged, the stud and equipages were in the very first style; in a word, by her generosity and kindness, the most beggarly knight belonging to the order of Alcantara became the most monied member of the fraternity. You may perhaps be disposed to ask me, how much I was in pocket by all that; and my answer is, fifty pistoles from my mistress, and a hundred from

my master, who, moreover, appointed me his secretary with a salary of four hundred crowns; nay, his confidence was so unbounded, that I was fixed on to fill the office of treasurer.

Treasurer! cried I, interrupting Scipio at the very idea, and bursting into an immoderate fit of laughter. Yes, sir, replied he, with a cool, unflinching seriousness; you are perfectly right, treasurer was the word; and I may venture to say that the duties of the office were executed without the slightest occasion for a committee of inquiry. True it is that the balance may be somewhat against me, for I was always in the habit of overdrawing my wages; and as the firm was dissolved somewhat suddenly, it is by no means impossible that the balance of my cash account might be on the wrong side: but, at all events, it was my last slip; and since that time my ways have been ways of uprightness and honesty.

Thus was I, continued this son of a gipsy, secretary and treasurer to Don Manriquez, who, to all appearance, was as happy in me as I in him, when he received a letter from Toledo, announcing that his aunt, Donna Theodora Moscoso, was on her last legs. He was so much affected by the news, as to set out instantly and pay his duty to that lady, who had been more than a mother to him for several years. I attended him on the journey with only two under-servants; we were all mounted on the best horses in the stable, and reached Toledo without loss of time, where we found Donna Theodora in a state to warrant our hopes that she would not, at present, weigh anchor on her outward bound voyage; and, in fact, our judgment on her case, though point blank in contradiction to that of an old physician who attended her, proved by the event that we knew at least as much of the matter as he did.

While the health of our venerable relative was improving from day to day, less, perhaps, from the effect of the prescriptions than in consequence of her dear nephew's presence, your worthy friend the treasurer passed his time in the pleasantest manner possible, with some young people whose acquaintance was admirably calculated to ventilate the confined cash in his pocket. Sometimes they enticed me to the tennis-court, and took me in for a game: on those occasions, not being quite so steady a player as my

master, Don Abel, I lost much oftener than I won. By degrees play become a passion with me; and if the taste had been suffered to gain complete possession, it would doubtless have laid me under the necessity of drawing bills of accommodation on the family bank; but happily love stepped in, and saved the credit both of the bank and of my principles. One day, passing along near the church of the Epiphany, I espied through a lattice with the drapery drawn up, a young girl who might well be called a thing divine, for nothing natural was ever seen so lovely. I would lay on my compliment still thicker, if words were not wanting to express the effect of her first appearance upon my mind. I set my wits to work, and by dint of diligent inquiry, learned that her name was Beatrice, and that she was waiting-maid to Donna Julia, younger daughter of the Count de Polan.

Beatrice broke in upon the thread of Scipio's story by laughing immoderately: then, directing her speech to my wife, Charming Antonia, said she, do but just look at me, I beseech you, and then say truly, whether I could be likened to a thing divine. You might at that time, to my enamoured sight, said Scipio; and, since your conjugal faith is no longer under a cloud, my visual appetite increases by what it feeds on. It was a pretty compliment! and my secretary, having fired it off, pursued his narrative as follows.

This intelligence kindled the flame of passion within me; but not, it must be confessed, a flame which could be acknowledged without a blush. I took it for granted that my triumph over her scruples would be easy if my biddings were high enough to command the ordinary market of female chastity; but Beatrice was a pearl beyond price. In vain did I solicit her, through the channel of some intriguing gossips, with the offer of my purse and of my most tender attentions; she rejected all my proposals with disdain. I had recourse to the lover's last remedy, and offered her my hand, which she deigned to accept on the strength of my being secretary and treasurer to Don Manriquez. As it seemed expedient to keep our marriage secret for some time, the ceremony was performed privately, in presence of Dame Lorenza Sephora, Seraphina's governess, and before some others of the Count de Polan's

household. After our happy union, Beatrice contrived the means of our meeting by day, and passing some part of every night together in the garden, whither I repaired through a little gate of which she gave me a key. Never were man and wife better pleased with each other than Beatrice and myself: with equal impatience did we watch for the hour of our appointment; with congenial emotions of eager sensibility did we hasten to the spot, and the moments which we passed together, though countless from their number in the calendar of cold indifference, to us were few and fleeting, in comparison with that eternity of mutual bliss for which we panted.

One night, a night which should be expunged from the almanac, a night of darkness and despair, contrasted with the brightness of all our former nights, I was surprised on approaching the garden, to find the little gate open. This unusual circumstance alarmed me; for it seemed to augur something inauspicious to my happiness: I turned pale and trembled, as if with a foreknowledge of what was going to happen. Advancing in the dark towards a bower, where our private meetings had usually taken place, I heard a man's voice. I stopped on the instant to listen, when the following words struck like the sound of death upon my ear: Do not keep me languishing in suspense, my dear Beatrice; make my happiness complete, and consider that your own fortunes are closely connected with mine. Instead of having patience to hear further, it seemed as if more had been said than blood could expiate; that devil, jealousy, took possession of my soul; I drew my sword, and breathing only vengeance, rushed into the bower. Ah! base seducer, cried I, whoever you are, you shall tear this heart from out my breast, rather than touch my honour on its tenderest point. With these words on my lips, I attacked the gentleman who was talking with Beatrice. He stood upon his guard without more ado, like a man much better acquainted with the science of arms than myself, who had only received a few lessons from a fencing-master at Cordova. And yet, strong as his sword-arm was, I made a thrust which he could not parry, or what is more likely, his foot slipped: I saw him fall; and fancying that I had wounded him mortally, ran away as hard as my legs could carry me, without

deigning to answer Beatrice, who would have called me back.

Yes, indeed! said Scipio's wife, resolved to have her share in the development of the story; I called out for the purpose of undeceiving him. The gentleman conversing with me in the arbour was Don Ferdinand de Leyva. This nobleman, who was in love with my mistress Julia, had laid a plan for running away with her, from despair of being able to obtain her hand by any other means; and I had myself made this assignation with him in the garden, to concert measures for the elopement, and with his fortune he assured me that my own was closely linked; but it was in vain that I screamed after my husband; he darted from me as if my very touch were contamination.

In such a state of mind, resumed Scipio, I was capable of anything. Those who know by experience what jealousy is, into what extravagance it drives the best-regulated spirits, will be at no loss to conceive the disorder it must have produced in my weak brain. I passed in a moment from one extreme to another: emotions of hatred succeeded instantaneously to all my former sentiments of affection for my wife. I took an oath never to see her more, and to banish her for ever from my memory. Besides, the supposed death of a man lay upon my conscience; and under that idea, I was afraid of falling into the hands of justice; so that every torment which could be accumulated on the head of guilt and misery by the fury of despair and the demon of remorse, was the remediless companion of my wretched flight. In this dreadful situation, thinking only of my escape, I returned home no more, but immediately quitted Toledo, with no other provision for my journey but the clothes on my back. It is true, I had about sixty pistoles in my pocket; a tolerable supply for a young man, whose views in life pointed no higher than a good service.

I walked forward all night, or rather ran, for the phantom of an alguazil always dogging me at the heels made me perform wonders of pedestrian activity. The dawn overtook me between Rodillas and Maqueda. When I was at the latter town, finding myself a little weary, I went into the church which was just opened, and having put up a short prayer, sat down on a bench to rest. I began musing on the state of my affairs, which were sufficiently out at elbows to re-

quire all my skill in patch-work, but the time for reflectio as well as for repentance were cut short. The church echoe on a sudden with three or four smacks of a whip, whic made me conclude that some carrier was on the road. immediately got up to go and see whether I was right o wrong. At the door I found a man, mounted on a mule leading two others by the halter. Stop, my friend, said I whither are those two mules going? To Madrid, answere he. I came hither with two good Dominicans, and am nov setting out on my return.

Such an opportunity of going to Madrid gave me a itching desire for the expedition: I made my bargain wit the muleteer, jumped upon one of his mules, and away w scampered towards Illescas, where we were to put up fo the night. Scarcely were we out of Maqueda before th muleteer, a man from five-and-thirty to forty, began chant ing the church service with a most collegiate twang. Thi trial of his lungs began with matins, in the drowsy tone of a canon between asleep and awake; then he roared out the Belief, alternately in contralto, tenor, and bass, in all the harmonious confusion of high mass; and not content with that, he rang the bell for vespers, without sparing me a single petition or so much as a bar of the *magnificat*. Though the scoundrel almost cracked the drum of my ear, I could not help laughing heartily; and even egged him on to make the welkin reverberate with his hallelujahs, when the anthem was suspended a few rests, for the necessary purpose of supplying wind to the organ. Courage, my friend! said I; go on and prosper. If heaven has given you a good capacious throat, you are neither a niggard nor a perverter of its precious boon. Oh! certainly not for the matter of that, cried he; happily for my immortal soul, I am not like carriers in general, who sing nothing but profane songs about love or drinking: I do not even defile my lips with ballads on our wars against the Moors: such subjects are at least light and unedifying, if not licentious and impure. You have, replied I, an evangelical purity of heart which belongs only to the elect among muleteers. With this excessive squeamishness of yours about the choice of your music, have you also taken a vow of continence, wherever there is a young bar-maid to be picked up at an inn? Assuredly, rejoined he, chastity is also a virtue by which it

s my pride to ward off the temptations of the road, where
ıy only business is to look after my mules. I was in no small
egree astonished at such pious sentiments from this pro-
igy of psalm-singing mule-drivers; so that looking upon
im as a man above the vanities and corruptions of this
ether world, I fell into chat with him after he had gone the
ength of his tether in singing.

We got to Illescas late in the day. On entering the inn-
ard, I left the care of the mules to my companion, and went
ıto the kitchen, where I ordered the landlord to get us a
ood supper, which he promised to perform so much to my
ıtisfaction, as to make me remember all the days of my
fe what usage travellers meet with at his house. As,
dded he, now only ask your carrier what sort of a man I am.
y all the powers of seasoning! I would defy the best cook
ı Madrid or Toledo to make an olio at all to be compared to
ine. I shall treat you this evening with some stewed
abbit after a receipt of my own; you will then see whether
i is any boast to say that I know how to send up a supper.
hereupon, shewing me a stewpan with a young rabbit, as
e said, cut up into pieces: There, continued he, is what I
ean to favour you with. When I shall have thrown in a
ttle pepper, some salt, wine, a handful of sweet herbs, and
few other ingredients which I keep for my own sauces, you
ay depend on sitting down to such a dish as would not
sgrace the table of a chancellor or an archbishop.

The landlord, having thus done justice to his own merits,
gan to work upon the materials he had prepared. While
e was labouring in his vocation, I went into a room, where
ring down on a sort of couch, I fell fast asleep through
tigue, having taken no rest the night before. In the
ace of about two hours, the muleteer came and awakened
e, with the information that supper was ready, and a
essing request to take my place at table. The cloth was
d for two, and we sat down to the hashed rabbit. I
ayed my knife and fork most manfully, finding the flavour
licious, whether from the force of hunger in communicat-
g a candid mode of interpretation to my palate, or from
e natural effect of the ingredients compounded by the
ok. A joint of roast mutton was next served up. It
as remarkable that the carrier only paid his respects to
is last article; and I asked him why he had not taken his

share of the other. He answered with a suppressed smile that he was not fond of made dishes. This reason, or rather the turn of countenance with which it was alleged, seemed to imply more than was expressed. You have not told me said I, the real meaning of your not eating the fricassee: do have the goodness to explain it at once. Since you are so curious to be made acquainted with it, replied he, I must own that I have an insuperable aversion to cramming my stomach with meats in masquerade, since one evening at an inn on the road between Toledo and Cuença, they served me up, instead of a wild rabbit, a hash of tame cat; enough, of all conscience, ever after to set my intestines in battle-array against all minces, stews, and force-meats.

No sooner had the muleteer let me into this secret, than in spite of the hunger which raged within me, my appetite left me completely in the lurch. I conceived, in all the horrors of extreme loathing, that I had been eating a cat dressed up as the double of a rabbit; and the fricassee had no longer any power over my senses, except by producing a strong inclination to retch. My companion did not lessen my tendency that way, by telling me that the inn-keepers in Spain, as well as the pastry-cooks, were very much in the habit of making that substitution. The drift of the conversation was, as you may perceive, very much in the nature of a lenitive to my stomach; so much so, that I had no mind to meddle any more with the dish of undefinables, nor even to make an attack upon the roast meat, for fear the mutton should have performed its duty by deputy as well as the rabbit. I jumped up from table, cursing the cookery, the cook, and the whole establishment; then, throwing myself down upon the sofa, I passed the night with less nausea than might reasonably have been expected. The day following with the dawn, after having paid the reckoning with as princely an air as if we had been treated like princes, away went I from Illescas, bearing my faculties so strongly impregnated with fricassee, that I took every animal which crossed the road, of whatever species or dimensions, for a cat.

We got to Madrid betimes, where I had no sooner settled with my carrier than I hired a ready-furnished lodging near the Sun-gate. My eyes, though accustomed to the great world, were nevertheless dazzled by the concourse of nobility which was ordinarily seen in the quarter of the

ourt. I admired the prodigious number of carriages, and he countless list of gentlemen, pages, gentlemen's gentlemen, nd plain, downright footmen in the train of the grandees. Ay admiration exceeded all bounds, on going to the king's evee, and beholding the monarch in the midst of his court. he effect of the scene was enchanting, and I said to myself, t is no wonder they should say that one must see the court f Madrid to form an adequate idea of its magnificence: I am elighted to have directed my course hither, and feel a sort f prescience within me that I shall not come away without aking fortune by surprise. I caught nothing napping, owever, but my own prudence, in making some thriftless, xpensive acquaintance. My money oozed away in the apid thaw of my propriety and better judgment, so that it ecame a measure of expedient degradation to throw away ny transcendant merit on a pedagogue of Salamanca, whom ome family lawsuit or other concern had brought to Madrid, here he was born, and where chance, more whimsical than ise, thrust me within the horizon of his knowledge. I ecame his right hand, his prime principal agent; and ogged him at the heels to the university when he returned ither.

My new employer went by the name of Don Ignacio de pigna. He furnished himself with the handle of don, inasuch as he had been tutor to a nobleman of the first rank, ho had recompensed his early services with an annuity for fe: he likewise derived a snug little salary from his prossorship in the university; and in addition to all this, laid e public under a yearly contribution of two or three ndred pistoles for books of uninstructive morality, which protruded from the press periodically by weight and easure. The manner in which he worked up the shreds d patches of his composition deserves a notice somewhat ore than cursory. The heavy hours of the forenoon were ent in muzzing over Hebrew, Greek, and Latin authors, d in writing down upon little squares of card every pithy ntence or striking thought which occurred in the morning's ading. According to the progress of this literary Pam, in nning tricks from the ancients, he employed me to score up s honours in the form of an Apollo's wreath: these metaysical garlands were strung upon wire, and each garland ade a pocket volume. What an execrable hash of whole-

some viands did we cook up! The commandments set at loggerheads with an utter confusion of tables; Epicurean conclusions grafted on stoical premises! Tully quoting Epictetus, and Seneca supporting his antitheses on the authority of monkish rhyme! Scarcely a month elapsed without our putting forth at least two volumes, so that the press was kept continually groaning under the weight of our transgressions. What seemed most extraordinary of all, was that these literary larcenies were palmed upon the purchasers for spick and span new wares, and if, by any strange and improbable chance, a thick-headed critic should stumble with his noddle smack against some palpable plagiarism, the author would plead guilty to the indictment, and make a merit of serving up at second-hand

> What Gellius or Stobæus hash'd before,
> Though chewed by blind old scholiasts o'er and o'er.

He was also a great commentator; and filled his notes chuck full of so much erudition, as to multiply whole pages of discussion upon what homely common-sense would have consigned to the brief alternative of a query:

> Disputes of Me or Te, or Aut at At,
> To sound or sink in cano O or A,
> Or give up Cicero to C or K.

As almost every author, ethical and didactic, from Hesiod down to himself, took his turn to dangle on some one or other of our manuscript garlands, it was impossible for me not to suck in somewhat of sage nurture from so copious a stream of philosophy: it would be rank ingratitude to shift off my obligation. My hand-writing also became strictly and decidedly legible, by dint of continual transcription; my estate was more that of a pupil than of a servant, and my morals were not neglected, while my mind was polished, and my faculties raised above their former level. Scipio, he used to say, when he chanced to hear of any serving lad with more cunning than honesty in his dealings, beware, my good boy, how you take after the evil example of that graceless villain. "The honour of a servant is his fidelity; his highest virtues are submission and obedience. Be studious of thy master's interests, be diligent in his affairs, and faithful to

the trust which he reposeth in thee. Thy time and thy labour belong unto him. Defraud him not thereof, for he payeth thee for them." To sum up all, Don Ignacio lost no opportunity of leading me on in the path of virtue, and his prudent counsels sank so deep into my heart, as to keep under anything like even the slightest wish of playing him a rogue's trick during the fifteen months which I spent in his service.

I have already mentioned that Doctor de Ipigna was a native of Madrid. He had a relation there, by name Catalina, waiting-maid to the lady who officiated as nurse to the heir-apparent. This abigail, the same through whose intervention I got Signor de Santillane released from the tower of Segovia, intent on rendering a service to Don Ignacio, prevailed with her mistress to petition the Duke of Lerma for some preferment. The minister named him for the archdeaconry of Grenada, which, as a conquered country, is in the king's gift. We repaired immediately to Madrid on receiving the intelligence, as the doctor wished to thank his patronesses before he took possession of his benefice. I had more than one opportunity of seeing Catalina, and conversing with her. The cheerful turn of my temper and a certain easy air of good company were altogether to her taste; for my part, I found her so much to my liking, that I could not help saying yes to the little advances of partiality which she made in my favour: in short, we got to feel very kindly towards each other. You must not write a comment with your nails, my dear Beatrice, on this episode in the romance of my amours, because I was firmly persuaded of your inconstancy, and you will allow that heresy, though impious, being also blind, my penance may reasonably be remitted on sincere conversion.

In the mean time Doctor Ignacio was making ready to set out for Grenada. His relation and myself, out of our wits at the impending separation, had recourse to an expedient which rescued us from its horrors: I shammed illness, complained of my head, complained of my chest, and made a characteristic wry face for every pain and ache in the catalogue of human infirmities. My master called in a physician, who told me with a grave face, after putting his questions in the usual course, that my complaint was of a much more serious nature than might appear to unpro-

fessional observation, and that, according to all present likelihood, I should keep my chamber a long time. The doctor impatient to take possession of his preferment, did not think it quite so well to delay his departure, but chose rather to hire another boy; he therefore contented himself with handing me over to the care of a nurse, with whom he left a sum of money to bury me if I should die, or to remunerate me for my services if I should recover.

As soon as I knew Don Ignacio to be safe on the road for Grenada, I was cured of all my maladies. I got up made my final bow to the physician who had evinced so thorough a knowledge of my case, and fairly turned my nurse out of doors, who made her retreat good with baggage and ammunition, to the amount of more than half the sum for which she ought to have accounted with me. While I was enacting the sick man, Catalina was playing another part about the person of her mistress, Donna Anna de Guévra, into whose conception having by dint of many a wordy process inserted the notion, that I was the man of all others ready cut and dry for an intrigue, she induced her to choose me for one of her agents. The royal and most catholic nurse, whose genius for great undertakings was either produced or exasperated by the love of great possessions, having occasion for suitable ministers, received me among her hangers-on, and lost no opportunity of ascertaining how far I was for her purpose. She confided some commissions to my care, which, vanity apart, called for no little address, and what they called for was ready at hand: accordingly, she gave me all possible credit for the diligent execution of my office, while my discontent swelled high against her for fobbing me off with the cold recompense of approbation. The good lady was so abominably avaricious, as not to give me a working partner's share in the profits of my industry, nor to allow for the wear and tear of my conscience. She seemed inclined to consider, that by paying me my wages, all the requisitions of Christian charity were made good between us. This excess of illiberal economy would soon have parted us, had it not been for the fascination of Catalina's gentle virtues, who became more desperately in love with me from day to day, and completed the paroxysm by a formal proposal of marriage.

Fair and softly, my pretty friend, said I: we must look before we leap into that bottomless gulf: the first point to be settled is to ascertain the death of a young woman, who obtained the refusal before you, and made me supremely happy, for no other purpose but to anticipate the purgatory of an intermediate state in the present. All a mere sham, a put off! answered Catalina: you swear you are married only by way of throwing a genteel veil over your abhorrence of my person and manners. In vain did I call all the powers to witness, that what I said was solemnly true: my sincere avowal was considered as a mere copy of my countenance; the lady was grievously offended, and changed her whole behaviour in regard to me. There was no downright quarrel; but our tender intercourse became visibly more rigid and unaccommodating, so that nothing further took place between us but cold formality and common-place attentions.

Just at the nick of time, I heard that Signor Gil Blas de Santillane, secretary to the prime minister of the Spanish monarchy, wanted a servant; and the situation was the more flattering, as it bore the bell among all the vacancies of the court register office. Signor de Santillane, they told me, was one of the first men, high in favour with the Duke of Lerma, and consequently in the direct road to fortune: his heart, too, was cast in the mould of generosity: by doing his business, you most assuredly did your own. The opportunity was too good to be neglected: I went and offered myself to Signor Gil Blas, to whom I felt my heart grow from the first; for my sentiments were fixed by the turn of his physiognomy. There could be no question about leaving the royal and most catholic nurse for him; and it is to be hoped, I shall never have any other master.

Here ended Scipio's story. But he continued speaking, and addressed himself to me. Signor de Santillane, do me the favour to assure those ladies that you have always known me for a faithful and zealous servant. Your testimony will stand me in good stead, and vouch for a sincere reformation in the son of Coselina.

Yes, ladies, said I, it is even so. Though Scipio in his childhood was a very scape-grace, he has been born anew, and is now the exact model of a trusty domestic. Far from having any complaints to make against him, my debt

is infinite. On the fatal night when I was carried off to the tower of Segovia, he saved my effects from pillage, and refunded what he might have taken to himself with impunity: not contented with rescuing my worldly pelf, he came out of pure friendship and shut himself up with me in my prison, preferring the melancholy sympathies of adverse fortune to all the charms of lusty, buoyant liberty.

BOOK THE ELEVENTH

CHAPTER I

CONTAINING THE SUBJECT OF THE GREATEST JOY THAT GIL BLAS EVER FELT, FOLLOWED UP, AS OUR GREATEST PLEASURES TOO GENERALLY ARE, BY THE MOST MELANCHOLY EVENT OF HIS LIFE. GREAT CHANGES AT COURT, PRODUCING, AMONG OTHER IMPORTANT REVOLUTIONS, THE RETURN OF SANTILLANE

I HAVE observed already that Antonia and Beatrice understood one another perfectly well; the latter falling meekly and modestly into the trammels of an humble attendant on her lady, and the former taking very kindly to the rank of a mistress and superior. Scipio and myself were husbands too rich in nature's gifts and in the affections of our spouses, not very soon to have the satisfaction of becoming fathers: our lasses were as women wish to be who love their lords, almost at the same moment. Beatrice's time was up first: she was safely delivered of a daughter; and in a few days afterwards Antonia completed the general joy, by presenting me with a son. I sent my secretary to Valencia with the welcome tidings: the governor came to Lirias with Seraphina and the Marchioness de Pliego, to be present at the baptismal ceremony; for he made it his pleasure to add this testimony of affection to all his former kindnesses. As that nobleman stood godfather, and the Marchioness godmother to my son, he was named Alphonso; and the governor's lady, wishing to draw the bonds of sponsorship still closer in this friendly

party, stood for Scipio's daughter, to whom we gave the name of Seraphina.

The rejoicings at the birth of my son were not confined to the mansion-house; the villagers of Lirias celebrated the event by festivities, which were meant as a grateful token, to prove how much the little neighbourhood partook in all the satisfactions of their landlord. But, alas! our carousals were of short continuance; or, to speak more suitably to the subject, they were turned into weeping, wailing, and lamentation, by a catastrophe which more than twenty years have not been sufficient to blot from my memory, nor will future time, however distant, make me think of it but with the bitterest retrospect. My son died; and his mother, though perfectly recovered from her confinement, very soon followed him: a violent fever carried off my dear wife, after we had been married fourteen months. Let the reader conceive, if he is equal to the task, the grief with which I was overwhelmed: I fell into a stupid insensibility; and felt my loss so severely, as to seem not to feel it at all. I remained in this condition for five or six days, in an obstinate determination to take no nourishment; and I verily believe that, had it not been for Scipio, I should either have starved myself, or my heart would have burst; but my secretary, well knowing how to accommodate himself to the turnings and windings of the human heart, contrived to cheat my sorrows by falling in with their tone and tenor: he was artful enough to reconcile me to the duty of taking food, by serving up soups and lighter fare with so disconsolate an arrangement of features that it looked as if he urged me to the revolting employment, not so much to preserve my life, as to perpetuate and render immortal my affliction.

This affectionate servant wrote to Don Alphonso, to let him know of the misfortune which had happened to me, and my lamentable condition in consequence. That tender-hearted and compassionate nobleman, that generous friend, very soon repaired to Lirias. I cannot recall the moment when he first presented himself to my view without even now being sensibly affected. My dear Santillane, said he, embracing me, I am not come to offer you impertinent consolation; but to weep over Antonia with you, as you would have wept with me over Seraphina, had the hand of death snatched

her from me. In good truth, his tears bore testimony to his sincerity, and his sighs were blended with mine in the most friendly sympathy. Though overwhelmed with my affliction, I felt in the most lively manner the kindness of Don Alphonso.

The governor had a long conversation with Scipio respecting the measures to be taken for overcoming my despair. They judged it best to remove me for some time from Lirias, where every object incessantly brought back to my mind the image of Antonia. On this account the son of Don Cæsar proposed carrying me back with him to Valencia; and my secretary seconded the plan with so many unanswerable arguments, that I made no further opposition. I left Scipio and his wife on my estate, where my longer stay could have produced no other effect but that of aggravating and enhancing all my sorrows, and took my own departure with the governor. On my arrival at Valencia, Don Cæsar and his daughter-in-law spared no exertions to divert my sorrows from perpetual brooding; they plied me alternately with every sort of amusement, the most proper to turn the current of my thoughts to passing objects; but, in spite of all their pains, I remained plunged in melancholy, whence they were incompetent to draw me out. Nor was it for want of Scipio's kind attentions that my peace of mind was still so hopeless: he was continually going back and fore between Lirias and Valencia to inquire after me; and his journey home was cheerful or gloomy, in proportion as he found more or less disposition in me to listen to the words of comfort, and to reward the affectionate solicitude of my friends.

He came one morning into my room. Sir, said he, with a great deal of agitation in his manner, a report is current about town, in which the whole monarchy is deeply interested: it is said that Philip the Third has departed this life, and that the prince, his son, is actually seated on the throne. To this it is added, that the cardinal Duke of Lerma has lost the premiership, that he is even forbidden to appear at court, and that Don Gaspard de Guzman, Count of Olivarez, is actually at the head of the administration. I felt a little agitated by this sudden change, without knowing why. Scipio caught at this manifestation, and asked whether the veering of the wind in the political horizon might not blow

me some good. How is that possible? What good can it blow me, my worthy friend? answered I. The court and I have shaken hands once for all: the revolutions which may take place there are all alike indifferent to me.

For a man at your time of life, replied that cunning son of a diviner, you are uncommonly mortified to all the uses of this world. Under your circumstances my curiosity would be all alive; I should go to Madrid and show my face to the young monarch, just to see whether he would recollect it, merely for the amusement of the thing. I understand you, said I; you would have me return to court and try my fortune again, or rather you would plunge me back into the gulf of avarice and ambition. Why should such baleful passions any more take possession of your breast? rejoined Scipio. Do not so much play the calumniator on your own virtue. I will answer for your firmness to yourself. The sound moral reflections which your disgrace has occasioned you to make on the vanities of a court life, are a sufficient security against all the dangers to be feared from that quarter. Embark boldly once again upon an ocean where you are acquainted with every shoal and rock in the dangerous navigation. Hold your tongue, you flatterer, said I, with a smile of no very positive discouragement; are you weary of seeing me lead a retired and tranquil life? I thought my repose had been more dear to you.

Just at this period of our conversation, Don Cæsar and his son came in. They confirmed the news of the king's death, as well as the Duke of Lerma's misfortune. It appeared, moreover, that this minister, having requested permission to retire to Rome, had not been able to obtain it, but was ordered to confine himself to his marquisate at Lerma. On this, as if they had been in league with my secretary, they advised me to go to Madrid and offer my congratulations to the new king, as one of his former acquaintances, with the merit of having rendered him even such services, as the great are apt to reward more willingly than some which are performed with cleaner hands. For my part, said Don Alphonso, I have no doubt but they will be liberally acknowledged: Philip the Fourth is bound in honour to pay the Prince of Spain's debts. I consider the affair just in the same light as you do, said Don Cæsar; and Santillane's visit to court will doubtless

prove the occasion of his arriving at the very first employments.

In good truth, my noble friends, exclaimed I, you do not consider what you are talking about. It should seem, were one to give ear to the soothing words of you both, as if I had nothing to do but to show my face at Madrid, and receive the key of office, or some foreign government for my pains; but you are egregiously mistaken. I am, on the contrary, well persuaded that the king would pass me over as a stranger, were I to throw myself in his way. I will make the experiment if you wish it, merely for the sake of undeceiving you. The lords of Leyva took me at my word, so that I could not help promising them to set out without loss of time for Madrid. No sooner did my secretary perceive my mind fully made up to the prosecution of this journey, than his ecstacies were wound up to the highest pitch: he was satisfied within himself that if I did but present my excellent person before the new monarch, he would immediately single me out from the crowd of political candidates, and weigh me down under a load of dignities and emoluments. On the strength of these conjectures, puffing himself out and amusing his fancy with the most splendid extravagances of device, he raised me up to the first offices of the state, and pushed forward his own preferment in the path of my exaltation.

I therefore made my arrangements for returning to court, without the most distant intention of again sacrificing at the shrine of fortune, but merely to convince Don Cæsar and his son of their error, in imagining that I was at all likely to ingratiate myself with the sovereign. It is true that there was some little lurking vanity at the bottom of all my philosophy, sprouting up in the shape of a desire to ascertain whether my royal master would throw away a thought on me, now in the spring time of his new and blushing honours. Led out of that course solely by that tempter, curiosity, without a dream of hope, or any practical contrivance for turning the new reign to my own individual advantage, I set out for Madrid with Scipio, consigning the management of my household to Beatrice, who was well skilled in all the arts of domestic economy.

CHAPTER II

GIL BLAS ARRIVES IN MADRID, AND MAKES HIS APPEARANCE AT COURT: THE KING IS BLESSED WITH A BETTER MEMORY THAN MOST OF HIS COURTIERS, AND RECOMMENDS HIM TO THE NOTICE OF HIS PRIME MINISTER. CONSEQUENCES OF THAT RECOMMENDATION

We got to Madrid in less than eight days, Don Alphonso having given us two of his best horses, that we might lose no time on the road. We alighted at a ready-furnished lodging, where I had lived formerly, kept by Vincent Ferrero, my old landlord, who was uncommonly glad to see me again.

As this man prided himself on being in the secret of whatever was going forward either in court or city, I asked him after the best news. There is plenty of it, whether best or worst, answered he. Since the death of Philip the Third, the friends and partisans of the Cardinal Duke of Lerma have been moving heaven and earth to support his Eminence on the pinnacle of ministerial authority, but their efforts have been ineffectual: the Count of Olivarez has carried the day, in spite of all their industry. It is alleged that Spain will be no loser by the exchange, and that the present premier is possessed of a genius so extensive, a mind so capacious, that he would be competent to wield the machine of universal government. New brooms, they say, sweep clean! But, at all events, you may take this for certain, that the public is fully impressed with a very favourable opinion of his capacity: we shall see by and by whether the Duke of Lerma's situation is well or ill filled up. Ferrero, having got his tongue into the right train for wagging, gave me all the particulars of all the changes which had taken place at court since the Count of Olivarez had taken his seat at the helm of the state vessel.

Two days after my arrival at Madrid, I repaired to the royal palace after my dinner, and threw myself in the king's way as he was crossing the lobby to his closet; but his notice was not at all attracted by my appearance. Next day, I returned to the same place, but with no better success. On the third day he looked me full in the face as he passed

by, but the stare was perfectly vacant, as far as my interest or my vanity was concerned. This being the case, I resolved in my own mind what was proper to be done: You see, said I, to Scipio, who accompanied me, that the king is grown out of my recollection; or if his memory is not become more frail with the elevation of his circumstances, he has some private reasons for not choosing to renew the acquaintance. I think we cannot do better than make our way back as fast as possible for Valencia. Let us not be in too great a hurry for that, sir, answered my secretary: you know better than myself, having served a long apprenticeship, that there is no getting on at court without patience and perseverance. Be indefatigable in exhibiting your person to the prince's regards: by dint of forcing yourself on his observation, you will oblige him to ask himself the question who this assiduous frequenter of his haunts can possibly be, when memory must come to his aid, and trace the features of his cheapener in the purchase of the lovely Catalina's good graces.

That Scipio might have nothing to reproach me with, I so far lent myself to his wishes as to continue the same proceeding for the space of three weeks; when at length it happened one day that the monarch, noticing the frequency of my appearance, sent for me into his presence. I went into the closet, not without some perturbation of mind at the idea of a private interview with my sovereign. Who are you? said he: your features are not altogether strange to me. Where have I seen you? Please your majesty, answered I trembling, I had the honour of escorting you one night with the Count of Lemos to the house of . . . . Ah! I recollect it perfectly, cried the prince, as if a sudden light had broke in upon him: you were the Duke of Lerma's secretary; and if I am not mistaken, your name is Santillane. I have not forgotten that on the occasion alluded to you served me with a most commendable zeal, but received a left-handed recompense for your exertions. Did you not get into prison at the conclusion of the adventure? Yes, please your majesty, replied I: my confinement in the tower of Segovia lasted six months; but your goodness was exercised in procuring my release. That, replied he, does not cancel my debt to my faithful servant Santillane: it is not enough to have restored him to liberty, for I ought to make

him ample amends for the evils which he has suffered on the score of his alacrity in my concerns.

Just as the prince was uttering these words, the Count of Olivarez came into the closet. The nerves of favourites are shaken by every breath, their irritability excited by every trifle: he was as much astonished as any favourite need be at the sight of a stranger in that place, and the king redoubled his wondering propensities by the following recommendation—Count, I consign this young man to your care, employ him, and let me find that you provide for his advancement. The minister affected to receive this order with the most gracious acquiescence, but looked me over from head to foot, with a glance from the corner of his eye, and was on tenter-hooks to find out who had been so strangely saddled upon him. Go, my friend, added the sovereign, addressing himself to me, and waving his hand for me to withdraw; the count will not fail to avail himself of your services in a manner the most conducive to the interests of my government, and the establishment of your own fortunes.

I immediately went out of the closet and made the best of my way to the son of Coselina, who, being overrun with impatience to inquire what the king had been talking about, fumbled at his fingers' ends, and was all over in an agitation. His first question was, whether we were to return to Valencia or become a part of the court. You shall form your own conclusions, answered I; at the same time delighting him with an account word for word of the little conversation I had just held with the monarch. My dear master, said Scipio at once in the excess of his joy, will you take me for your almanac-maker another time? You must acknowledge that we were not in the wrong! the lords of Leyva and myself have our eye-teeth about us! a journey to Madrid was the only measure to be adopted in such a case. Already I anticipate your appointment to an eminent post: you will turn out to be some time or other a Calderona to the Count of Olivarez. That is by no means the object of my ambition, observed I in return; the employment is placed on too rugged an eminence to excite any longings in my mind. I could wish for a good situation where there could be no inducement to do what might go against my conscience, and where the favours of my prince are not

likely to be bartered away for filthy lucre. Having experienced my own unfitness for the possession of patronage, I cannot be sufficiently on my guard against the inroads of avarice and ambition. Never think about that, sir! replied my secretary, the minister will give you some handsome appointment, which you may fill without any impeachment of your integrity or independence.

Induced more by Scipio's importunity than my own curiosity, I repaired the following day before sunrise to the residence of the Count d'Olivarez, having been informed that every morning, whether in summer or winter, he gave audience by candlelight to all comers. I ensconced myself modestly in a corner of the saloon, and from my lurking-place took especial notice of the count when he made his appearance; for I had marked his person but cursorily in the king's closet. He was above the middle stature, and might pass for fat in a country where it is a rarity to see any but lean subjects. His shoulders were so high, as to look exactly as if he was hump-backed, but appearances were slanderous; for his blade-bones, though inelegant, were a pair; his head, which was large enough to be capacious, dropped down upon his chest by the unwieldiness of its own weight; his hair was black and unconscious of a curl, his face lengthened, his complexion olive-coloured, his mouth retiring inwards, with the sharp-pointed, turn-up chin of a pantaloon.

This whole arrangement of structure and symmetry did not exactly make up the complete model of a nobleman according to the ideas of ancient art; nevertheless, as I believed him to be in a temper of mind favourable to the gratification of my wishes, I looked at his defects with an indulgent eye, and found him a man very much to my satisfaction. One of the best points about him was, that he received the public at large with the utmost affability and complacency, holding out his hand for petitions with as much good humour as if he were the person to be obliged, and this was a sufficient set-off against anything untoward in the expression of his countenance. In the mean time, when in my turn I came forward to pay my respects and make myself known to him, he darted at me a glance of rude dislike and frightful menace; then turning his back, without condescending to give me audience, retired into his closet.

Then it was that the ugliness of this nobleman's features appeared in all the extravagance of caricature: so that I made the best of my way out of the saloon, thunder-struck at so savage a reception, and quite at a loss how to conjecture what might be the consequence.

Having got back to Scipio, who was waiting for me at the door—Can you guess at all, said I, what sort of a greeting mine was? No, answered he, not as to the minute particulars; but with respect to the substance, easily enough: the minister, ready upon all occasions to fall in with the fancies of his royal master, must of course have made you a handsome offer of an ostensible and lucrative situation. That is all you know about the matter, replied I; and then went on to acquaint him circumstantially with all that passed. He listened to me with serious attention, and then said—The count could not have recollected your person; or rather, he must have been deceived by a fortuitous resemblance between you and some impertinent suitor. I would advise you to try another interview; I will lay a wager he will look on you more kindly. I adopted my secretary's suggestion, and stood for a second time in the presence of the minister; but he, behaving to me still worse than at first, puckered up his features the moment my unlucky countenance came within his ken, just as if it was connected with some lodged hate and certain loathing, which of force swayed him to offend, himself being offended; after this significant demonstration, he turned away his glaring eyeballs, and withdrew without uttering a word.

I was stung to the quick by so hostile a treatment, and in a humour to set out immediately on my return to Valencia; but to that project Scipio uniformly opposed his steady objections, not knowing how for the life of him to part with those flattering hopes which fancy had engendered in his brain. Do you not see plainly, said I, that the count wishes to drive me away from court? The monarch has testified in his presence some sort of favourable intention towards me, and is not that enough to draw down upon me the thorough hatred of the monarch's favourite? Let us drive before the wind, my good comrade; let us make up our minds to put quietly into port, and leave the open sea and the honours of the flag in the possession of an enemy with whom we are too feeble to contend. Sir, answered he,

in high resentment against the Count of Olivarez, I would not strike so easily. I would go and complain to the king of the contempt in which his minister held his recommendation. Bad advice, indeed, my friend, said I; to take so imprudent a step as that, would soon bring bitter repentance in the train of its consequences. I do not even know whether it is safe for me to remain any longer in this town.

At this hint, my secretary communed a little with his own thoughts; and, considering that in point of fact we had to do with a man who kept the key of the tower of Segovia in his pocket, my fears became naturalized in his breast. He no longer opposed my earnest desire of leaving Madrid, and I determined to take my measures accordingly on the very next day.

CHAPTER III

THE PROJECT OF RETIREMENT IS PREVENTED, AND JOSEPH NAVARRO BROUGHT UPON THE STAGE AGAIN, BY AN ACT OF SIGNAL SERVICE

On my way home to my lodgings I met Joseph Navarro, whom the reader will recollect as on the establishment of Don Balthasar de Zuniga, and one of my old friends. I made my bow first at a distance, then went up to him, and asked whether he knew me again, and if he would still be so good as to speak to a wretch who had repaid his friendship with ingratitude. You acknowledge then, said he, that you have not behaved very handsomely by me? Yes, answered I; and you are fully justified in laying on your reproaches thick and threefold: I deserve them all, unless indeed my guilt may be thought to have been atoned by the remorse of conscience attendant on it. Since you have repented of your misconduct, replied Navarro, embracing me, I ought no longer to hold it in remembrance. For my part, I knew not how to hug Joseph close enough in my arms; and we both of us resumed our original kind feelings towards one another.

He had heard of my imprisonment and the derangement of my affairs; but of what followed he was totally ignorant. I informed him of it; relating word for word my conversation with the king, without suppressing the minister's late

ungracious reception of me, any more than my present purpose of retiring into my favourite obscurity. Beware of removing from the scene of action, said he: since the sovereign has shown a disposition to befriend you, there are always uses to be made of such a circumstance. Between ourselves, the Count of Olivarez has something rather unaccountable in his character: he is a very good sort of nobleman, but rather whimsical withal: sometimes, as on the present occasion, he acts in a most offensive manner, and none but himself can furnish a clue to disentangle the intricate thread of his motives and their results. But however this may be, or whatever reasons might have swayed him to give you so scurvy a reception, keep your footing here, and do not budge; he will not be able to hinder you from thriving under the royal shelter and protection; take my word for that! I will just give a hint upon the subject this evening to Signor Don Balthasar de Zuniga, my master; he is uncle to the Count of Olivarez, and shares with him in the toils and cares of office. Navarro having given me this assurance, inquired where I lived, and then we parted.

It was not long before we met again; for he came to call on me the very next day. Signor de Santillane, said he, you are not without a protector; my master will lend you his powerful support: on the strength of the good character which I have given your lordship, he has promised to speak to his nephew, the Count of Olivarez, in your behalf; and I doubt not but he will effectually prepossess him in your favour. My friend Navarro not meaning to serve me by halves, introduced me two days afterwards to Don Balthasar, who said with a gracious air: Signor de Santillane, your friend Joseph has pronounced your panegyric in terms which have won me over completely to your interest. I made a low obeisance to Signor de Zuniga, and answered, that to the latest period of my life I should entertain the most lively sense of my obligation to Navarro, for having secured to me the protection of a minister, who was considered, and that for the best reasons possible, as the presiding genius, the greater luminary, or, as it were, the eye and mind of the ministerial council. Don Balthasar, at this unexpected stroke of flattery, clapped me on the shoulder with an approving chuckle, and returned my compliment by a more significant intimation: You may call on the Count of Olivarez again

to-morrow, and then you will have more reason to b pleased with him.

For the third time, therefore, did I make my appear ance before the prime minister, who, picking me out fron among the mob of suitors, cast upon me a look conveyin with it a simper of welcome, from which I ventured to drav a good omen. This is all as it should be, said I to myself the uncle has brought the nephew to his proper bearings I no longer anticipated any other than a favourable recep tion, and my confidence was fully justified. The count after having given audience to the promiscuous crowd took me with him into his closet, and said with a familia address: My friend Santillane, you must excuse the littl disquietude I have occasioned you merely for my own amusement; it was done in sport, though it was death t you, for the sole purpose of practising on your discretion and observing to what measures your disgust and disap pointment would incite you. Doubtless you must have concluded that your services were displeasing to me; bu on the contrary, my good fellow, I must confess frankly that, as far as appears at present, you are perfectly to my mind. Though the king my master had not enjoined me to take charge of your fortunes, I should have done so o my own free choice. Besides, my uncle, Don Balthasar de Zuniga, to whom I can refuse nothing, has requested me to consider you as a man for whom he particularly interests himself: that alone would be enough to fix my confidence in you, and make me most sincerely your friend.

This outset of my career produced so lively an impres- sion on my feelings, that they became unintelligibly tumul- tuous. I threw myself at the minister's feet, who insisted on my rising immediately, and then went on to the follow- ing effect: Return hither to-day after dinner, and ask for my steward: he will acquaint you with the orders which I shall have given him. With these words his excellency broke up the conference to hear mass, according to his constant custom every day after giving audience: he then attended the king's levee.

CHAPTER IV

GIL BLAS INGRATIATES HIMSELF WITH THE COUNT OF OLIVAREZ

I DID not fail returning after dinner to the prime minister's house, and asking for his steward, whose name was Don Raymond Caporis. No sooner had I made myself known, than paying his civilities to me in the most respectful manner, Sir, said he, follow me if you please: I am to do myself the honour of shewing you the way to the apartment which is ordered for you in this family. Having spoken thus, he led me up a narrow staircase to a gallery communicating with five or six rooms, which composed the second story belonging to one wing of the house, and were furnished neatly, but without ostentation. You behold, resumed he, the lodging assigned you by his lordship, where you will always have a table of six persons, kept at his expense. You will be waited on by his own servants; and there will always be a carriage at your command. But that is not all: his excellency insisted on it in the most pointed manner, that you should be treated in every respect with the same attention as if you belonged to the house of Guzman.

What the devil is the meaning of all this? said I within myself. What construction ought I to put upon all these honours? Is there not some humorous prank at the bottom of it? and must it not be more in the way of diversion than anything else, that the minister is flattering me up with so imposing an establishment? While I was ruminating in this uncertainty, fluctuating between hope and fear, a page came to let me know that the count was asking for me. I waited instantly on his lordship, who was quite alone in his closet. Well! Santillane, said he, are you satisfied with your rooms, and with my orders to Don Raymond? Your excellency's liberality, answered I, seems out of all proportion with its object; so that I receive it with fear and trembling. Why so? replied he. Can I be too lavish of distinction to a man whom the king has committed to my care, and for whose interests he specially commanded me to provide? No, that is impos-

sible; and I do no more than my duty in placing you on footing of respectability and consequence. No longe therefore, let what I do for you be a subject of surpris but rely on it that splendour in the eye of the world, an the solid advantages of accumulating wealth, are equall within your grasp, if you do but attach yourself as faith fully to me as you did to the Duke of Lerma.

But now that we are on the subject of that noblema continued he, it is said that you lived on terms of persona intimacy with him. I have a strong curiosity to learn th circumstances which led to your first acquaintance, as we as in what department you acted under him. Do no disguise or gloss over the slightest particular, for I sha not be satisfied without a full, true, and circumstantia recital. Then it was that I recollected in what an embar rassing predicament I stood with the Duke of Lerma on similar occasion, and by what line of conduct I extricate myself; that same course I adopted once again with th happiest success; whereby the reader is to understand tha throughout my narrative I softened down the passage likely to give umbrage to my patron, and glanced with superficial delicacy over transactions which would hav reflected but little lustre on my own character. I like wise manifested a considerate tenderness for the Duke o Lerma; though by giving that fallen favourite no quarter I should better have consulted the taste of him whom wished to please. As for Don Rodrigo de Calderona, there I laid about me with the religious fury of a bishop in a battle. I brought together, and displayed in the mos glaring colours, all the anecdotes I had been able to pick up respecting his corrupt practices and underhand dealing in the sale of promotions, military, ecclesiastical, and civil.

What you have told me about Calderona, cried the minister with eagerness, exactly squares with certain memorials which have been presented to me, containing the heads of charges still more seriously affecting his char acter. He will very soon be put upon his trial, and if you have any wish to glut your revenge by his ruin, I am of opinion that the object of your desire is near at hand. I am far from thirsting after his blood, said I, though had it depended on him, mine might have been shed in the tower

of Segovia, where he was the occasion of my taking lodgings for a pretty long term. What! inquired his excellency, was it Don Rodrigo who procured you that sudden journey? this is a part of the story of which I was not aware before. Don Balthasar, to whom Navarro gave a summary of your adventures, told me indeed that the late king gave orders for your commitment, as a mark of his indignation against you for having led the Prince of Spain astray, and taken him to a house of suspicious character in the night: but that is all I know of the matter, and cannot for the life of me conjecture what part Calderona could possibly have had to play in that tragi-comedy. A principal part, whether on the stage or in real life, answered I: that of a jealous lover, taking vengeance for an injury, sustained in the tenderest point. At the same time I related minutely all the facts with which the reader is already acquainted, and touched his risible propensities, difficult as they were of access, so exactly in the right place, that he could not help wagging his under-hung jaw in a paroxysm of humour-stricken ecstasy, and laughing till he cried again. Catalina's double cast in the drama delighted him exceedingly; her sometimes playing the niece and sometimes personating the grand-daughter seemed to tickle his fancy more than anything; nor was he altogether inattentive to the appearance which the Duke of Lerma made in his undignified farce of state.

When I had finished my story, the count gave me leave to depart, with an assurance that on the next day he would not fail to make trial of my talents for business. I ran immediately to the family hotel of Zuniga, to thank Don Balthasar for his good offices, and to acquaint my friend Joseph with the favourable dispositions of the prime minister, and my brilliant prospects in consequence.

CHAPTER V

THE PRIVATE CONVERSATION OF GIL BLAS WITH NAVARRO AND HIS FIRST EMPLOYMENT IN THE SERVICE OF THE COUNT D'OLIVAREZ

As soon as I got to the ear of Joseph, I told him with much trepidation of spirits what a world of topics I had to deposit in his private ear. He took me where we might be alone, when I asked him, after having communicated the key to the whole transaction up to the present time, what he thought of the business as it stood. I think, answered he, that you are in a fair way to make an enormous fortune. Everything turns out according to your wishes: you have made yourself acceptable to the prime minister; and what must be taken for something in the account, I can render you the same service as my uncle Melchior de la Ronda when you attached yourself to the archiepiscopal establishment of Grenada. He spared you the trouble of finding out the weak side of that prelate and his principal officers, by discovering their different characters to you; and it is my purpose, after his example, to bring you perfectly acquainted with the count, his lady countess, and their only daughter, Donna Maria de Guzman.

The minister's parts are quick, his judgment penetrating and his talents altogether calculated for the formation of extensive projects. He affects the credit of universal genius, on the strength of a showy smattering in general science; so that there is no subject, in his own opinion, too difficult to be decided on his mere authority. He sets himself up for a practical lawyer, a complete general, and a politician of thorough-paced sagacity. Add to all this that he is so obstinately wedded to his own opinions, as unchangeably to persevere in the path of his own chalking out, to the absolute contempt of better advice, for fear of seeming to be influenced by any good sense or intelligence but what he would be thought to engross in the resources of his own mind. Between ourselves, this blot in his character may produce strange consequences, which it may be well for the monarchy should indulgent heaven for the defect of human means avert! As for his talents in coun-

cil, he shines in debate by the force of natural eloquence, and would write as well as he speaks, if he did not injudiciously affect a certain dignity of style, which degenerates into affectation, quaintness, and obscurity. His modes of thinking are peculiar to himself; he is capricious in conduct, and visionary in design. Here you have the picture of his mind, the light and shade of his intellectual merits: the qualities of his heart and disposition remain to be delineated. He is generous and warm in his friendships. It is said that he is revengeful; but would he be a Spaniard if he were otherwise? In addition to this, he has been accused of ingratitude, for having driven the Duke of Uzeda and Friar Louis Aliaga into banishment, though he owed them, according to common report, obligations of the most binding nature; and yet even this must not be looked into so narrowly under his circumstances: there are few breasts capacious enough to afford house-room for two such opposite inmates as political ambition and gratitude.

Donna Agnes de Zuniga é Velasco, Countess of Olivarez, continued Joseph, is a lady to whom it is impossible to impute more than one fault, but that is a huge one; for it consists in making a market, and a market the most exorbitant in its terms, of her natural influence over the mind of her husband. As for Donna Maria de Guzman, who beyond all dispute is at this moment the very first match in Spain, she is a lady of first-rate accomplishments, and absolutely idolized by her father. Regulate your conduct upon these hints: make your court with art and plausibility to these two ladies, and let it appear as if you were more devoted to the Count of Olivarez than ever you were to the Duke of Lerma before your forced excursion to Segovia; you will become a leading and powerful member of the administration.

I should advise you, moreover, added he, to see my master, Don Balthasar, from time to time; for though you have no longer any occasion for his interest to push you forward, it will not be amiss to waste a little incense upon him. You stand very high in his good opinion; preserve your footing there, and cultivate his friendship; it may stand you in some stead on any emergency. I could not help observing, that as the uncle and nephew were in a

certain sort partners in the government of the state, there might possibly be some little symptom of jealousy between brothers near the throne. On the contrary, answered he, they are united by the most confidential ties. Had it not been for Don Balthasar, the Count of Olivarez might probably never have been prime minister; for you are to know, that after Philip the Third had paid the debt of nature, all the adherents and partisans belonging to the house of Sandoval made a great stir, some in favour of the cardinal, and others on his son's behalf; but my master a greater adept in court intrigue than any of them, and the count, who is nearly as great an adept as himself, disconcerted all their measures, and took their own so judiciously for the purpose of stepping into the vacant place, that their rivals had no chance against them. The Count of Olivarez, being appointed prime minister, divided the duties with his uncle, Don Balthasar; leaving foreign affairs to him, and taking the home department to himself: the consequence is, that the bonds of family friendship are drawn closer between these two noblemen, than if political influence had no share in their mutual interests; they are perfectly independent in their respective lines of business, and live together on terms of good understanding which no intrigue can possibly affect or alter.

Such was the substance of my conversation with Joseph, and the advantage to be derived from it was my own to make the most of: at all events, it was my duty to thank Signor de Zuniga for all the influence he had the goodness to exert in my favour. He assured me with infinite good-breeding that he should avail himself of every opportunity as it arose to promote my wishes, and that he was very glad his nephew had behaved so as to meet my ideas, because he meant to refresh his memory in my behalf, being determined, as he was pleased to say, to place it beyond all manner of doubt how far he himself participated in all my views, and to make it evident that, instead of one fast friend, I had two. In terms like these did Don Balthasar, through mere friendship for Navarro, take the moulding of my fortunes on himself.

On that same evening did I leave my paltry lodging to take up my abode at the prime minister's, where I sat down to supper with Scipio in my own suite of apartments.

There were we both waited on by the servants belonging to the household, who as they stood behind our chairs, while we were affecting the pomp and circumstance of political elevation, were more likely than not to be laughing in their sleeves at the pantomime they had been ordered by their manager to play in our presence. When they had taken away and left us to ourselves, my secretary being no longer under restraint, gave vent to a thousand wild imaginations which his sprightly temper and inventive hopes engendered in his fancy. On my part, though by no means cold or insensible to the brilliant prospects which were opening on my view, I did not as yet yield in the least degree to the weakness of being thrust aside from the right line of my philosophy by temporal allurements. So much otherwise, that on going to bed I fell into a sound sleep, without being haunted in my dreams by those phantoms of flattering delusion which might have gained admittance with no severe question from a corruptible door-keeper. The ambitious Scipio, on the contrary, tossed and tumbled all night in the agitation of restless contrivance. Whenever he dozed a little imp took possession of his brain, with a pen behind its ear, working out by all the rules of arithmetic the bulky sum total of his daughter Seraphina's marriage portion.

No sooner had I got my clothes on the next morning, than a message came from his lordship. I flew like lightning at the summons, when his excellency said: Now then, Fantillane, suppose you give us a specimen of your talents for business. You say that the Duke of Lerma used to give you state papers to bring into official form; and I have one, by way of experiment, on which you shall try your skill. The subject you will easily comprehend: it turns upon an exposition of public affairs, such as to throw in artificial light on the first appearance of the new ministry, and to prejudice the public in its favour. I have already whispered it about by my emissaries, that every department of the state was completely disorganized, that the talents which preceded us were no talents at all; and the object at present is to impress both court and city by a formal declaration with the idea, that our aid is absolutely necessary to save the monarchy itself from sinking. On this theme you may expatiate till the populace become

lock-jawed with astonishment, and the sober part of th public are gravely argued out of all prepossession in favo of the discarded party. By way of contrast, you will ta of the *dignus vindice nodus*, taking care to translate it in Spanish; and boast of the measures adopted under the ne order of things, to secure the permanent glory of the king reign, to give perpetual prosperity to his dominions, an to confer perfect, unchangeable happiness on his goo people.

His lordship, having given out the general subject my thesis, left me with a paper containing the heads charges, whether just or unjust, against the late admini tration: and I remember perfectly well, that there were te articles, whose lightest word, even of the lightest articl would harrow up the soul of a true Spaniard, and make h knotted and combined locks to part. That the curre of my fancy might experience no interruption, he shu me into a little closet near his own, where the spirit of poetr might possess me in all its freedom and independence. M best faculties were called forth, to compose a statemer of affairs commensurate with my own concern in the swee ing of the new brooms. My first object was to lay ope the nakedness and abandonment of the kingdom: th finances in a state of bankruptcy, the civil list and imm diate resources of the crown pawned fifty times over, th navy unpaid, dismantled, and in mutiny. All this hideou delineation was referred for its justice and accuracy to th wrongheadedness and stupidity of government at th close of the last reign, and the doctrine most strongly en forced, that unexampled wisdom and patriotism only coul ward off the fatal consequences. In short, the monarch could only be sustained on the shoulders of our politica sufficiency and reforming prudence. The ex-ministr were so cruelly belaboured, that the Duke of Lerma ruin, according to the terms of my syllogism, was the sa vation of Spain. To own the truth, though my profession were in the spirit of Christian charity towards that noble man, I was not sorry to give him a sly rub in the exercis of my function. Oh man! man! what a compound c candour-breathing satire and splenetic impartiality ar thou!

Towards the conclusion, having finished my frightful por

raiture of overhanging evils, I endeavoured to allay the storm my art had raised by making futurity as bright as the past had been gloomy. The Count of Olivarez was brought in at the close, like the tutelary deity of an ancient commonwealth in the crisis of its fate. I promised more than paganism ever feigned or chivalry fancied in the wildest of its crusading projects. In a word, I so exactly executed what the new minister meant, that he seemed not to know his own hints again, when drawn out in my emphatic and appropriate language. Santillane, said he, do you know that this is more like the composition one might expect from a secretary of state, than like that of a private secretary? I can no longer be surprised that the Duke of Lerma was fond of calling your talents into action. Your style is concise, and by no means inelegant; but it keeps rather too much in the level paths of nature. At the same time, pointing out the passages which did not hit his fancy, he corrected them; and I gathered from the touches he threw in, that Navarro was right in saying he affected pretentious wit, but mistook for it quaint and stale conceits. Nevertheless, though he preferred the stately, or rather the grotesque in writing, he suffered two thirds of my performance to stand without alteration; and by way of proving how entirely he was satisfied, sent me three hundred pistoles by Don Raymond after dinner.

CHAPTER VI

THE APPLICATION OF THE THREE HUNDRED PISTOLES, AND SCIPIO'S COMMISSION CONNECTED WITH THEM. SUCCESS OF THE STATE PAPER MENTIONED IN THE LAST CHAPTER

This handsome present of the minister furnished Scipio with a new subject of congratulation, by reason of our second appearance at court. You may remark, said he, that fortune is preparing a load of aggrandizement to lay upon your lordship's shoulders. Are you still sorry for having turned your back on solitude? May the Count of Olivarez live for ever! he is a very different sort of a master from his predecessor. The Duke of Lerma, with

all your devotion to his service, left you to live upon su
tion for months without a pistole to bless yourself with; a
the count has already made you a present which y
could have had no reason to expect but after a course
long service.

I should very much like, added he, that the lords
Leyva should be witnesses of your great success, or
least that they should be informed of it. It is high tin
indeed, answered I, and I meant to speak with you on th
subject. They must doubtless be impatient to hear of m
proceedings, but I waited till my fate was fixed, and till
could decide for certain whether I should stay at cou
or not. Now that I am sure of my destination, you hav
only to set out for Valencia whenever you please, and
acquaint those noblemen with my present situation, whic
I consider as their doing, since it is evident that, bu
for them, I should never have resolved on my journey
Madrid. My dear master, cried the son of Bohemia
accident, what joy shall I communicate by relating wha
has happened to you! Why am I not already at the gat
of Valencia? But I shall be there forthwith. Do
Alphonso's two horses are ready in the stable. I sha
take one of my lord's livery servants with me. Beside
that company is pleasant on the road, you know very we
the effect of official parade, in making impression on th
natives of a provincial town.

I could not help laughing at my secretary's foolis
vanity; and yet, with vanity perhaps more than equal to h
own, I left him to do as he pleased. Go about your bus
ness, said I, and make the best of your way back; for I hav
another commission to give you. I mean to send you to th
Asturias with some money for my mother. Through neg
lect I have suffered the time to elapse when I promised to re
mit her a hundred pistoles, and pledged you to make the pay
ment in person. Such engagements ought to be held sacre
by a son; and I reproach myself with inaccuracy in the ob
servance of mine. Sir, answered Scipio, within six weeks
shall bring you an account of both your commissions; havin
opened my budget to the lords of Leyva, looked in at you
country-house, and taken a peep at the town of Oviedo, th
recollection of which I cannot admit into my mind, withou
turning over three-fourths of the inhabitants, and one-hal

of the remaining quarter, to the corrective discipline of that infernal executioner, who is supposed to be kept on foot for the purpose of castigating sinners. I then counted down one hundred pistoles to that same son of a wandering mother for my honoured parent's annuity, and another hundred for himself; meaning that he should perform his long journey without grumbling on my account by the way.

Some days after his departure his lordship sent our memorial to press; and it was no sooner published than it became the topic of conversation in every circle throughout Madrid. The people, enamoured of novelty, took up this well-written statement of their own wretchedness with fond partiality; the derangement and exhaustion of the finances, painted with a mixture of truth and poetry, excited a strong feeling of popular indignation against the Duke of Lerma; and if these paper bullets of the brain, cast in the political armoury of a rival, failed to carry victory with them in the opinions of all mankind, they were at all events hailed with triumph by the most clamorous of our own partisans. As for the magnificent promises which the Count of Olivarez threw in, and among others that of keeping the machine of state in motion, by a system of economy, without adding to the public burdens, they were caught at with avidity by the citizens at large, and considered as pledges of an enlightened and patriotic policy, so that the whole city resounded with the acclamation of panegyric and congratulation on the opening of new prospects.

The minister, delighted to have gained his end so easily, which in that publication had only been to draw popularity upon himself, was now determined to seize the substance as well as catch at the shadow, by an act of unquestionable credit with the subject, and high utility to the king's service. For that purpose, he had recourse to the emperor Galba's contrivance, consisting in a forced regurgitation of ill-gotten spoils from individuals who had made large fortunes, hell and their own consciences knew best how, in the superintendence of the royal expenditure. When he had squeezed these spunges till they were dry again, and had filled the king's coffers with the drainings, he undertook to render the reform permanent by abolishing all pensions, not excepting his own, and curtailing the gratuities too frequently bestowed on favourites out of the prince's privy purse. To

succeed in this design, which he could not carry into effe without changing the face of the government, he charg me with the composition of a new state paper, furnishi the substance and the form from his own idea. He th advised me to raise my style as much as possible above t level of my ordinary simplicity, and to give an air of mo eloquence to my phraseology. A hint is sufficient, my lor said I; your excellency wishes to unite sublimity with ill mination, and it shall be so. I shut myself up in the san closet where I had already worked so successfully, and s down stiffly to my task, first calling to my aid the lofty ar clear perceptions, the noble and sonorous expressions, of m old instructor, the archbishop of Grenada.

I began by laying it down as a first maxim of politic philosophy, that the vital functions, the respiration as were of all monarchy, depended on the strict administr tion of the finances; that in our particular case that du became imperiously urgent, irresistibly impressing on o consciences; and that the revenue should be considered the nerves and sinews of Spain, to hold her rivals in chec and keep her enemies in awe. After this general declam tion, I pointed out to the sovereign, for to him the memori was addressed, that by cutting down all pensions and pe quisites dependent on the ordinary income, he would n thereby deprive himself of that truly royal pleasure, princely munificence towards those of his subjects who ha established a fair claim to his favours; because witho drawing upon his treasury, he had the means of distributir more acceptable rewards; that for one branch of servic there were viceroyalties, lieutenancies, orders of merit, an all sorts of military commissions: for another, high judici situations with salaries annexed, civil offices of magistrac with sounding titles to give them consequence; and thoug last, not least, all the temporal possessions of the church animate the piety of its spiritual pastors.

This memorial, which was much longer than the firs occupied me nearly three days; but as luck would have i my performance was exactly to my master's mind, wh finding it written with sententious cogency, and bristled u with metaphors in the declamatory parts, complimented m in the highest terms. That is vastly well expressed indeed said he, laying his finger on a passage here and there, an

picking out all the most inflated sentences he could find: hat language bears the stamp of fine composition, and night pass for the production of a classic. Courage, my friend! I foresee that your services will be worth their weight in gold. And yet, notwithstanding the applauses he lavished on my classical composition, a few of his own heightening touches, he thought, would make it read still better. He put a good deal of his own stuff into it, and the medley was manufactured into a piece of eloquence which was considered as unanswerable by the king and all the court. The whole city joined in opinion with the higher orders, deriving the most flattering hopes of the future from these grand promises, and concluding that the monarchy must recover its pristine splendour during the ministry of so illustrious a character. His excellency, finding that my sermon on economy was fraught with practical inferences of utility to him, was kind enough to wish that I should profit by the exercise of my own talents. In conformity therefore with his new system of patronage, he gave me an annuity of five hundred crowns on the commandery of Castile; and the acceptance of it was so much the more palatable, as no dirty work had been done for it, but it was honestly, though cheaply, earned.

CHAPTER VII

GIL BLAS MEETS WITH HIS FRIEND FABRICIO ONCE MORE; THE ACCIDENT, PLACE, AND CIRCUMSTANCES DESCRIBED; WITH THE PARTICULARS OF THEIR CONVERSATION TOGETHER

NOTHING gave his lordship greater pleasure than to hear the general decision of Madrid on the conduct of his administration. Not a day passed but he inquired what they were saying of him in the political world. He kept spies in pay, to bring him an exact account of what was going on in the city. They particularized the most trivial discourses which they overheard; and their orders being to suppress nothing, his self-love was grazed now and then, for the people have a way of bolting out home truths, without any the calculation where they may glance.

Finding that the count loved political small talk, I made it my business to frequent places of public resort after dinner, and to chime in with the conversation of genteel people whenever opportunity offered. Should the measures of government happen to be canvassed among them, I pricked up my ears, and greedily took in their discourse: if anything worth repeating was said, his excellency was sure to hear of it. It can scarcely be necessary to hint that I never carried home anything which was not likely to pay for the porterage.

One day, returning from one of these little conversational parties, my road lay in front of an hospital. It occurred to me to go in. I walked through two or three wards, filled with diseased patients, and examined their beds to see that they were properly taken care of. Among these unhappy wretches, whom I could not look at without the most painful feelings, I observed one whose features struck me: it surely could be no other than Fabricio, my countryman and chum! To look at him more closely, I drew near his bedside, and finding beyond a possibility of doubt that it was the poet Nunez, I stopped to look at him for a few seconds without saying a word. He also fixed his regards on me. At length breaking silence: Do not my eyes deceive me? said I. Is it indeed Fabricio, and here? It is indeed, answered he, coldly, and you need not wonder at it. Since we parted, I have been working indefatigably at the trade of an author: I have written novels, plays, and works of genius in every department. My brain is fairly spun out, and here I am.

I could not help laughing at such a sketch of literary biography; and still more at the serious air of the accompanying action. What! cried I, has your muse brought you to this pass? Has she played you such a jade's trick as this? Even as you witness, answered he; this establishment is a sort of half-pay receptacle for invalids on the muster-roll of disabled wit. You have acted discreetly, my good friend, to lay yourself out for promotion in a different line. But they tell me, you are no longer a courtier, and that your prospects in political life were all blasted; nay, they went so far as to affirm, that you were committed to close custody by the king's order. They told you no more than the truth, replied I: the delightful vision of political

minence wherein you left me last, soon shifted the scene of my incoherent dreams to a prison and complete destitution. But for all that, my friend, here you behold me again in a better plight than ever. That is quite out of the question, said Nunez: your deportment is discreet and decent, you have not that supercilious and devil-take-the-hinder-most sort of aspect, which good keep communicates to the human face. The reverses of this chequered life, replied I, have brought me down to the level of the more modest virtues; I have taken a lesson in the school of adversity, to enjoy the possession of a good stud without riding the great horse.

Tell me then candidly, cried Fabricio, raising his head upon his hand with his elbow upon the pillow, what your present occupation can possibly be. A steward perhaps to some nobleman out at elbows, or man of business to some rich widow! Something better than either the one or the other, rejoined I, but excuse me from saying more at present: another time your curiosity shall be satisfied. It is enough at present to assure you that my means are equal to my inclination, and that you may command independence through me; but then you must submit to an embargo on your wit, and a non-intercourse act between you and the faculty of writing, whether in verse or prose. Can you make this sacrifice to my friendship? I have already made it to the powers above, said he, in my last critical sickness. A Dominican made me forswear poetry, as an amusement bordering on criminality, but at all events beside the turnpike-road of good sense. I wish you joy, my dear Nunez, replied I; beware of a revoke. There is not the least danger on that head, rejoined he: the Muses and I have agreed on terms of separation: just as you came in at that door, I was conning over a farewell ode. Good master Fabricio, said I, with a wise swagging to and fro of my head, it is a doubtful question whether your vow of abjuration ought to pass current with the Dominican and myself: you are over head and ears in love with those virgins incarnate. No, no, contended he peevishly, I have cut the connection under. Nay, more, I have quarrelled with their keepers, the public. The readers of these days do not deserve an author of more genius than themselves: I should be sorry to write down to their comprehension. You are not

to suppose that this is the language of disgust; it is n sincere and well-weighed opinion. Applause and hisses a just the same to me. It is a toss up who fails and wh succeeds: the wit of to-day is the blockhead of to-morrow What cursed fools our dramatists must be, to care fo anything but their poundage when their plays happen to b received! It is all very well for a few nights! But onl fancy a revival at the end of twenty years, and what figure they will cut then! The audiences of the presen day turn up their noses at the stock pieces of the last ag and it is a question whether their taste will fare better wit their more critical descendants. If that conjecture b probable, the inventors of clap-traps now will be the but of cat-calls hereafter. It is just the same with novel writer and all other manufacturers of unnecessary literature: the strut and fret for an hour, and then are no more seen o heard of. The glories of successful authorship are the mer vapours of a murky atmosphere, meteors of a marsh, fou coruscations of a dunghill, cathedral tapers to put out th galaxy, blue flames of coarse paper held over a candle.

Though these caricatures of rival renown were the mer creations of jealousy in the poet of the Asturias, it was no my business to correct his ill temper. I am delighted, sai I, that wit and you have had so serious a quarrel; and tha the diarrhœa of your inventive faculties has been cured b an astringent. You may depend on it, I will put you in th way of a good livelihood, without drawing deep upon you intellectual credit. So much the better, cried he; w smells like carrion in my nostrils, or rather like a pungen and deleterious perfume; fragrant to the sense, but corr sive to the vitals. I heartily wish, my dear Fabricio resumed I, that you may always keep in that mind. Onl wash your hands completely of poetry, and you may depen on it, I will enable you to keep your head above wate without picking or stealing. In the mean while, added slipping a purse of sixty pistoles into his hand, accept th as a slight instance of my regard.

O friend like the friends in days of yore, cried the son barber Nunez, out of his wits with joy and gratitude, it wa heaven itself which sent you into this hospital, whence you goodness is now discharging me! Before we parted I gav him my address, and invited him to come and see me a

soon as his health would permit. He opened his eyes as an oyster does its shell, when I told him that I lodged under the minister's roof. O illustrious Gil Blas! said he, great as Pompey and fortunate as Sylla, whose lot it is to be hand in glove with the dictators of modern times! I rejoice most disinterestedly in your good fortune, because it is so very evident what a noble use you make of it.

CHAPTER VIII

GIL BLAS GETS FORWARD PROGRESSIVELY IN HIS MASTER'S AFFECTIONS. SCIPIO'S RETURN TO MADRID, AND ACCOUNT OF HIS JOURNEY

THE Count of Olivarez, whom I shall henceforward call my lord duke, because the king was pleased to confer that dignity on him about this time, was infested with a weakness which I did not suffer to pass without taking toll: it was a furious desire of being beloved. The moment he fancied that any one really liked him, his heart was caught in a trap. This was not lost upon my keen sense of character. It was not enough to do precisely as he ordered; I superadded a zeal in the execution which made him mine. I laid myself out to his liking in everything, and provided beforehand for his most eccentric wishes.

By conduct like this, which almost always answers, I became by degrees my master's favourite; and he, on the other hand, as if he had got round to my blind side also, conformed himself into my affections, by giving me his own. So forward did I get into his good graces, as to halve his confidence with Signor Carnero, his principal secretary.

Carnero had played my game; and that so successfully, as to be intrusted with the greater mysteries. We two therefore were the keepers of the prime minister's conscience, and held the keys of all his secrets: with this difference, that Carnero was consulted on state affairs, myself about his private concerns, dividing the business into two separate departments; and we were each of us equally pleased with our own. We lived together without jealousy, and certainly without attachment. I had every reason to be satisfied with my quarters, where continual intercourse

gave me an opportunity of prying into the duke's inmos soul, which was a masked battery to all mankind beside, bu plain as a pikestaff to me, when he no longer questione the sincerity of my attachment to him.

Santillane, said he one day, you were witness to th Duke of Lerma's possession of an authority, more like tha of an absolute monarch than a favourite minister; and ye I am still happier than he was at the very summit of hi good fortune. He had two formidable enemies in his ow son, the Duke of Uzeda, and in the confessor of Philip th Third: but there is no one now about the king who ha credit enough to stand in my way, or even, as I am aware the slightest inclination to do me mischief.

It is true, continued he, that on my accession to th ministry, it was my first care to remove all hangers-o from about the prince but those of my own family or con nections. By means of viceroyalties or embassies I go rid of all the nobility who, by their personal merit, coul have interfered with me in the good graces of the sovereign whom I mean to engross entirely to myself; so that I ma say at the present moment, no statesman of the time hold me in check by the ascendancy of his personal influence You see, Gil Blas, I open my mind to you. As I have reaso to think that you are mine heart and soul, I have chosen t put you in possession of everything. You are a cleve youth; with reflection, penetration, and discretion: in short you are just the very creature to acquit yourself of all possi ble little offices in all possible directions; you are also young fellow of very promising parts, and must in th nature of things be in my interest.

There was no standing the attack which these flatterin representations were calculated to make upon the weakl defended fortress of my philosophy. Unauthorized whim of avarice and ambition mounted suddenly into my head and brought forward certain sentiments of political specu lation which were supposed to have been in abeyance. gave the minister an assurance that I should fulfil his inten tions to the utmost of my power, and held myself in readines to execute without examination or inference all the order it might be his pleasure to give me.

While I was thus disposed to take fortune in her affabl fit, Scipio returned from his peregrination. I have no lon

tory for you, said he. The lords of Leyva were delighted
ht your reception from the king, and at the manner in which
he Count of Olivarez and you came to understand one
nother.

My friend, said I, you would have delighted them still
nore, had you been able to tell them on what a footing I am
ow with my lord. My advances since your departure
ave been prodigious. Happy man be his dole, my dear
aster, answered he: my mind forebodes that we shall cut
figure.

Let us change the subject, said I, and talk of Oviedo.
ou have been in the Asturias. How did you leave my
other? Ah, sir! replied he, with an undertaker's decency
f countenance, I have a melancholy tale to tell you from
hat quarter. O heaven! exclaimed I, my mother then is
ead! Six months since, said my secretary, did the good
dy pay the debt of nature, and your uncle, Signor Gil
'erez, about the same period.

My mother's death preyed upon my susceptible nature,
nough in my childhood I had not received from her those
ttle fondling indications of maternal love, so necessary
amalgamate with the more serious convictions of filial
uty. The good canon, too, came in for his share in bring-
g me up according to the rules of godliness and honesty.
y serious grief was not lasting: but I never lost sight of a
rtain tender recollection, whenever the idea of my dear
lations shot across my mind.

CHAPTER IX

OW MY LORD DUKE MARRIED HIS ONLY DAUGHTER, AND TO WHOM: WITH THE BITTER CONSEQUENCES OF THAT MARRIAGE

VERY shortly after the son of Coselina's return, my lord
ke fell into a brown study, and it lasted a complete week.
onceived, of course, that he was brooding over some great
easure of government; but family concerns were the
ject of his musings. Gil Blas, said he one day after dinner,
u may perceive that my mind is a good deal distracted.
s, my good friend, I am pondering over an affair of the

utmost consequence to my feelings. You shall know a about it.

My daughter, Donna Maria, pursued he, is marriageable and of course beset with suitors. The Count de Niéblés eldest son of the Duke de Medina Sidonia, head of th Guzman family, and Don Lewis de Haro, eldest son of th Marquis de Carpio and my eldest sister, are the two mos likely competitors. The latter in particular is superior i point of merit to all his rivals, so that the whole court ha fixed on him for my son-in-law. Nevertheless, withou entering into private motives for treating him, as well as th Count de Niéblés, with a refusal, my present views are fixe upon Don Ramires Nunez de Guzman, Marquis of Tora head of the Guzmans d'Abrados, another branch of th family. To that nobleman and his progeny by my daughte I mean to leave all my property, and to entail on them th title of Count d'Olivarez, with the additional dignity of gran dee; so that my grandchildren and their descendants, issu of the Abrados and Olivarez branch, will be considered a taking precedence on the house of Guzman.

Tell me now, Santillane, added he, do you not like my pro ject? Excuse me, my lord, pleaded I, with a shrug, th design is worthy of the genius which gave birth to it: m only fear is, lest the Duke of Medina Sidonia should thin fit to be out of humour at it. Let him take it as he lis resumed the minister; I give myself very little concer about that. His branch is no favourite with me: they hav choused that of Abrados out of their precedence and man of their privileges. I shall be far less affected by his i humours than by the disappointment of my sister, th Marchioness de Carpio, when she sees my daughter sli through her son's fingers. But let that be as it may. I a determined to please myself, and Don Ramires shall be th man; it is a settled point.

My lord duke, having announced this firm resolve, did n carry it into effect without giving a new proof of his singul policy. He presented a memorial to the king, entreatin him and the queen in concert, to do him the honour taking the choice of a husband for his daughter on then selves, at the same time acquainting them with the prete sions of the suitors, and professing to abide by their electio but he took care, when naming the Marquis de Tora

o evince clearly whither his own wishes pointed. The ring, therefore, with a blind deference for his minister, nswered thus: "I think that Don Ramires Nunez eleserves Donna Maria: but determine for yourself. The natch of your own choosing will be most agreeable to me." Signed) THE KING.

The minister made a point of shewing this answer every- where; and affecting to consider it as a royal mandate, astened his daughter's marriage with the Marquis de oral; a death-blow to the hopes of the Marchioness de arpio, and the rest of the Guzmans who had been speculat- g on an alliance with Donna Maria. These rival players of losing game, not being able to break off the match, put ne best face they could upon it, and made the fashion- ble world to resound with their costly celebrations of the went. A superficial observer might have fancied that the hole family was delighted with the arrangement; but the outers and ill-wishers were soon revenged most cruelly t my lord duke's expense. Donna Maria was brought to ed of a daughter at the end of ten months; the infant was ill-born, and the mother died a few days afterwards.

What a loss for a father who had no eyes, as one may y, but for his daughter, and in her loss felt the miscar- ge of his design to quash the right of precedence in the anch of Medina Sidonia! Stung to the quick by his isfortune, he shut himself up for several days, and was isible to no one but myself; a sincere sympathiser, from e recollection of my own experience in his sorrow. The casion drew forth fresh tears to Antonia's memory. The ath of the Marchioness de Toral, under circumstances so milar, tore open a wound imperfectly skinned over, and so asperated my affliction, that the minister, though he had ough to do with his own sufferings, could not help taking tice of mine. It seemed unaccountable how exactly his elings were echoed. Gil Blas, said he one day, when my rs seemed to feed upon indulgence, my greatest conso- ion consists in having a bosom friend so much alive to my distresses. Ah! my lord, answered I, giving him the l credit of my amiable tenderness, I must be ungrateful d degenerate in my nature if I did not lament as for self. Can I be aware that you mourn over a daughter accomplished merit, whom you loved so tenderly, with-

out shedding tears of fellow-feeling! No, my lord, I am to much naturalized to you on the side of obligation, not t take a permanent interest in all your pleasures and dis pointments.

CHAPTER X

GIL BLAS MEETS WITH THE POET NUNEZ BY ACCIDENT, AN LEARNS THAT HE HAS WRITTEN A TRAGEDY, WHICH I ON THE POINT OF BEING BROUGHT OUT AT THE THEATR ROYAL. THE ILL FORTUNE OF THE PIECE, AND TH GOOD FORTUNE OF ITS AUTHOR

THE minister began to pick up his crumbs, and myse consequently to get into feather again, when one evenin I went out alone in the carriage to take an airing. On th road I met the poet of the Asturias, who had been lost t my knowledge ever since his discharge from the hospita He was very decently dressed. I called him up, gave him seat in my carriage, and we drove together to Saint Jerome meadow.

Master Nunez, said I, it is lucky for me to have met yo accidentally; for otherwise I should not have had th pleasure. . . . No severe speeches, Santillane, interrupted h with considerable eagerness: I must own frankly that did not mean to keep up your acquaintance, and I will te you the reason. You promised me a good situation pro vided I abjured poetry, but I have found a very exce lent one, on condition of keeping my talents in constan play. I accepted the latter alternative, as squaring bes with my own humour. A friend of mine got me an employ ment under Don Bertrand Gomez del Ribero, treasurer o the king's galleys. This Don Bertrand, wanting to have wit in his pay, and finding my turn for poetical compositio very much in unison with his own sense of what is excellen has chosen me in preference to five or six authors who offere themselves as candidates for the place of his private secr tary.

I am delighted at the news, my dear Fabricio, said for this Don Bertrand must be very rich. Rich indeed answered he; they say that he does not know himse how much he is worth. However that may be, my bus

ness under him is as follows. He prides himself on his turn for gallantry, at the same time wishing to pass for a man of genius: he therefore keeps up an epistolary intercourse of wit with several ladies who have an infinite deal, and borrows my brain to indite such letters as may amplify the opinion of his sprightliness and elegance. I write to one for him in verse, to another in prose, and sometimes carry the letters myself, to prove the agility of my heels as well as the ingenuity of my head.

But you do not tell me, said I, what I most want to know. Are you well paid for your epigrammatic cards of compliment? Yes, most plentifully, answered he. Rich men are not always open-handed; and I know some who are downright curmudgeons; but Don Bertrand has behaved in the most handsome manner. Besides a salary of two hundred pistoles, I receive some little occasional perquisites from him, sufficient to set me above the world, and enable me to live on an equal footing with some choice spirits of the literary circles, who are willing, like myself, to set care at defiance. But then, resumed I, has your treasurer critical skill enough to distinguish the beauties of a performance from its blemishes? The least likely man in the world, answered Nunez: a flippant-tongued smatterer, with a miserable assortment of materials for judging. Yet he gives himself out for chief justice and lord president of Apollo's tribunal. His decisions are adventurous, if not always lucky; while his opinions are maintained in so high a tone and with so bullying a challenge of infallibility, that nine times out of ten the issue of an argument is silence, though not conviction, on the part of the opponent, as a measure of precaution against the gathering storm of foul language and contemptuous sneers.

You may readily suppose, continued he, that I take special care never to contradict him, though it almost exceeds human patience to forbear: for, to say nothing of the unpalatable phrases that might be hailed down on my defenceless head, I should stand a very good chance of being moved by the shoulders out of doors. I therefore am discreet enough to approve what he praises, and to condemn without mitigation or appeal whatever he is pleased to find fault with. By this easy compliance, for poets are compelled to acquire a knack of knocking under to those

by whom they live, not even excepting their booksellers, I have gained the esteem and friendship of my patron. He has employed me to write a tragedy on a plot of his own. I have executed it under his inspection; and if the piece succeeds, a per centage on the laud and honour must accrue to him.

I asked our poet what was the title of his tragedy. He informed me that it was "The Count of Saldagna," and that it would come out in two or three days. I told him that I wished it all possible success, and thought so favourably of his genius, as to entertain considerable hopes. So do I, said he, but hope never tells a more flattering tale than in the ear of a dramatic author. You might as well attempt to fix the wind by nailing the weathercock, as speculate on the reception of a new piece with an audience.

At length, the day of performance arrived. I could not go to the play, being prevented by official business. The only thing to be done was to send Scipio, that he might bring me back word how it went off; for I was sincerely interested in the event. After waiting impatiently for his return, in he came with a long face which boded no good. Well, said I, how was "The Count of Saldagna" welcomed by the critics? Very roughly, answered he; never was there a play more brutally handled; I left the house in high anger at the injustice and insolence of the pit. It serves him right, rejoined I. Nunez is no better than a madman, to be always running his head against the stone walls of a theatre. If he was in his senses, could he have preferred the hisses and cat-calls of an unfeeling mob, to the ease and dignity he might have commanded under my patronage? Thus did I inveigh with friendly vehemence against the poet of the Asturias, and disturb the even tenor of my mind for an event, which the sufferer hailed with joy, and inserted among the well-omened particulars of his journal.

He came to see me within two days, and appeared in high spirits. Santillane, cried he, I am come to receive your congratulations. My fortune is made, my friend, though my play is marred. You know what a mistake they made on the first and last night of "The Count of Saldagna;" hissed instead of applauding! You would have thought all the wild beasts of the forest had been

let loose, with their ears fortified against the softening power of poetry: but the more they bellowed, the better I fared, and they have roared me into a provision for life.

There was no knowing what to make of this incident in the drama of our poet's adventures. What is all this, Fabricio? said I: how can theatrical damnation have conjured up such Elysian ecstacy? It is exactly so, answered he: I told you before that Don Bertrand had thrown in some of the circumstances; and he was fully convinced that there was no defect but in the taste of the spectators. They might be very good judges; but, if they were, he was no judge at all! Nunez! said he this morning;

Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.[1]

Your piece has been ill-received by the public; but against that you may place my entire approbation; and thus you ought to set your heart at rest. By way of something to balance the bad taste of the age, I shall settle an annuity of two thousand crowns on you: go to my solicitor, and let him draw the deed. We have been about it: the treasurer has signed and sealed; my first quarter is paid in advance . . . . .

I wished Fabricio joy on the unhappy fate of "The Count of Saldagna," and probably most authors would have envied his failure more than all the success that ever succeeded. You are in the right, continued he, to prefer my fortune to my fame. What a lucky peal of disapprobation a double choir! If the public had chosen to ring the changes on my merits rather than my misdeeds, what could they have done for my pocket? A mere paltry nothing. The common pay of the theatre might have kept me from starving; but the wind of popular malice has blown me a comfortable pension, engrossed on safe and legal parchment.

[1] Members of parliament, and the ladies, will probably expect a translation of these hard words; but I refer the former to their dictionaries, to which they bade a long farewell on leaving Eton or Harrow; and the latter to an extended paraphrase of five acts in the tragedy of Cato. Those of the softer sex who may think the Stoic philosphy rude and uncouth, will feel their nerves vibrate in unison with the love scenes. TRANSLATOR.

CHAPTER XI

SANTILLANE GIVES SCIPIO A SITUATION: THE LATTER SET OUT FOR NEW SPAIN

My secretary could not look at the unexpected good luck of Nunez the poet without envy: he talked of nothing else for a week. The whims of that baggage, Fortune, said he, are most unaccountable: she delights to turn her lottery wheel into the lap of a sorry author, while she deals out her disappointments like a step-mother to the race of good ones. I should have no objection, though, if she would throw me up a prize in one of her vertical progresses. That is likely enough to happen, said I, and sooner than you imagine. Here you are in her temple; for it is scarcely too presumptuous to call the house of a prime minister the temple of Fortune, where favours are conferred by wholesale, and votaries grow fat on the spoils of her altar. That is very true, sir, answered he; but we must have patience and wait till the happy moment comes. Take my advice while it is worth having, Scipio, replied I, and make your mind easy: perhaps you are on the eve of some good appointment. And so it turned out; for within a few days an opportunity offered of employing him advantageously in my lord duke's service; and I did not suffer the happy moment to pass by.

I was engaged in chat one morning with Don Raymond Caporis, the prime minister's steward, and our conversation turned on the sources of his excellency's income. My lord, said he, enjoys the commanderies of all the military orders, yielding a revenue of forty thousand crowns a year, and he is only obliged to wear the cross of Alcantara. Moreover, his three offices of great chamberlain, master of the horse, and high chancellor of the Indies, bring him in an income of two hundred thousand crowns; and yet all this is nothing in comparison of the immense sums which he receives through other transatlantic channels; but you will be puzzled to guess how. When vessels clear out from Seville or Lisbon for those parts of the world, he ships wine, oil, grain, and other articles, the produce of his own estate; and his consignments are duty free. With this

perquisite in his pocket, he sells his merchandise for four times its current price in Spain, and then lays out the money in spices, colouring materials, and other things which cost next to nothing in the new world, and are sold very dear n Europe. Already has he realized some millions by this raffic, without detracting from the dues of his royal master.

You will easily account for it, continued he, that the people concerned in carrying on this trade return with great fortunes in their pockets; for my lord thinks it but easonable that they should divide their diligence between is business and their own.

That shrewd son of chance and opportunity, of whom ve are speaking, overheard our conversation, and could not elp interrupting Don Raymond to the following purport. Upon my word, Signor Caporis, I should like to be one f those people; for I am fond of travelling, and have ng wished to see Mexico. Your inclinations as a tourist hall soon be gratified, said the steward, if Signor de Santillane will not stand in the way of your wishes. However articular I may think it my duty to be about the persons hom I send to the West Indies in that capacity, and they re all of my appointment, you shall be placed on the list t all adventures, if your master wishes it. You will nfer on me a particular favour, said I to Don Raymond; e so good as to do it in kindness to me. Scipio is a young llow much in my good graces, very capable in business, nd will be found irreproachable in his conduct. In a word, would as soon answer for him as myself.

That being the case, replied Caporis, he has only to repair mediately to Seville: the ships are to sail for South merica in a month. I shall give him a letter at his depare for a man who will put him in the way of making a rtune, without the slightest interference in his excellency's es and profits, which ought to be held sacred by him.

Scipio, delighted with his berth, was in haste to set out r Seville with a thousand crowns with which I furnished m, to make purchases of wine and oil in Andalusia, and able him to trade on his own bottom in the West Indies. nd yet, overjoyed as he was to make a voyage, and as he ped his fortune therewithal, he could not part from me thout tears: and the separation raised the waters even m my dry fountains.

CHAPTER XII

DON ALPHONSO DE LEYVA COMES TO MADRID; THE MOTIVE OF HIS JOURNEY A SEVERE AFFLICTION TO GIL BLAS, AND A CAUSE OF REJOICING SUBSEQUENT THEREON

No sooner had I parted with Scipio than one of the minister's pages brought me a note conceived in the following terms: "If Signor de Santillane will take the trouble of calling at the sign of Saint Gabriel, in the street of Toledo, he will there see a friend who is not indifferent to him."

Who can this nameless friend possibly be? said I to myself. What can be the meaning of all this mystery? Obviously to occasion me the pleasure of a surprise. I attended the summons immediately, and on my arrival at the place appointed, was not a little astonished to find Don Alphonso de Leyva there. Is it possible! exclaimed I: you here, my lord? Yes, my dear Gil Blas, answered he with a close compression of my hand in his, it is Don Alphonso himself. Well! but what brings you to Madrid? said I. You will be not a little startled, rejoined he, and no less vexed at the occasion of my journey. They have taken my government of Valencia from me, and the prime minister has sent for me to give an account of my conduct. For a whole quarter of an hour I was like a man stupified; then recovering the powers of speech: Of what, said I, are you accused? I know nothing at all about it, answered he, but my disgrace is probably owing to a visit paid about three weeks ago to the Cardinal Duke of Lerma, who was banished about a month since to his seat at Denia.

Yes, indeed! cried I in a pet, you may well attribute your misfortune to that imprudent visit: there is no occasion to look out for causes and effects elsewhere; but give me leave to say that you have not acted with your usual good sense, in claiming acquaintance with that favourite out of favour. The leap is taken, and the neck broken, said he; and I have nothing to do but to make the best out of a bad bargain: I shall retire with my family to our paternal estate at Leyva, where the remnant of my days will glide away in peace and obscurity. What taunts and teases me, is the requisition of appearing before a haughty

minister, who may receive me with all the insolence of office. How humiliating to the pride of a Spaniard! And yet it is a measure of necessity; but before the degrading ceremony took place, I wanted to talk it over with you. Sir, said I, do not announce your arrival to the minister, till I have ascertained the nature of the reports to your discredit; for there are few evils without a remedy. Whatever may be your alleged crimes, you will give me leave, if you please, to act in the affair as gratitude and friendship shall dictate. With this assurance, I left him at his inn, and promised to let him hear from me soon.

As I had taken no active part in state affairs since the two memorials, in which my eloquence was so signally displayed, I went to look for Carnero, with a view to inquire whether Don Alphonso's government was really taken from him. He answered in the affirmative, but professed not to know the reason. Finding how things stood, I determined to apply at head-quarters, and to learn the grounds of grievance from his lordship's own mouth.

My spirits were really harassed; so that there was no need of putting on the trappings and the suits of woe, to attract my lord duke's notice. What is the matter, Sanillane? said he, as soon as he saw me. I perceive a marked unhappiness on your countenance, and tears just ready to trickle down your cheeks. Has any one behaved ill to you? Tell me, and you shall have your revenge. My lord, answered I, in a melancholy tone, even though my grief would seek to hide itself, it must have vent: my despair is past endurance. The report goes that Don Alphonso is no longer Governor of Valencia; a severer stroke could not have been inflicted on me. What say you, Gil Blas? replied the minister in astonishment: what interest can you take in this Don Alphonso and his government? On this question, I detailed at length my obligations to the Lords of Leyva, and modestly stated my own interference with the Duke of Lerma, to obtain the appointment for my friend.

When his excellency had heard me through with the most polite and kind attention, he spoke thus: Make yourself easy, Gil Blas. Besides my entire ignorance of what you have just told me, I must own that I considered Don Alphonso as the cardinal's creature. Only put your-

self in my place: was not the visit to his eminence a most suspicious circumstance? Yet I am willing to believe that owing his preferment to that minister, he might have remembered him in his adversity from a motive of pure gratitude. I am sorry for having displaced a man who owed his elevation to you; but if I have pulled down your handiwork I can build it up again. I mean to do still more than the Duke of Lerma for you. Your friend Don Alphonso was only Governor of Valencia; I appoint him Viceroy of Arragon: you may send him word so yourself and order him hither to take the oaths.

At these words, my feelings changed from extreme grief to an excess of joy, which completely caricatured the mediocrity of common sense, and made me utter an incoherent rhapsody of thanks: but the want of method in the madness of my discourse was not taken amiss; and on my hinting that Don Alphonso was already at Madrid, he told me that I might present him this very day. I ran to the sign of Saint Gabriel, and communicated my own raptures to Don Cæsar's son, by informing him of his new appointment. He could not believe what I told him; but found it a hard matter to persuade himself, that the prime minister, though likely enough to be very well disposed towards me, should extend his friendship so far as to dispose of viceroyalties at my instance. I carried him with me to my lord duke, who received him very affably, complimented him on his uniform good conduct in his government of Valencia, and finished by saying that the king, considering him as qualified for a higher station, had named him for the viceroyalty of Arragon. Besides, added he, your family is of a rank not to disparage the dignity of the office; so that the Arragonese nobility will have no plea for excepting against the choice of the court.

His excellency made no mention of me, and the public was kept in the dark as to my share in the business; indeed this prudent silence was lucky both for Don Alphonso and the minister, since the tongues of defamers would have been busy in taking to pieces the pretensions of a viceroy who owed his preferment to my patronage.

As soon as Don Cæsar's son could speak with certainty of his new honours, he sent off an express for Valencia with the information to his father and Seraphina, who

soon arrived in Madrid. Their first object was to find me out, and ply me thick and threefold with acknowledgments. What a proud and affecting sight for me, to behold the three persons in the world nearest my heart, vying with each other in their testimonies of affection and gratitude! The pleasure my zeal seemed personally to give them, was equal to the dignity conferred on their house by the post of viceroy. They even talked with me on a footing of equality, and scarcely remembered my original distance or servitude in the fervour of their present feelings. But not to dwell on unnecessary topics, Don Alphonso having taken the oaths and returned thanks, left Madrid with his family, to take up his abode at Saragossa. He made his public entry with appropriate magnificence; and the Arragonese caused it to appear, by their cordial reception, that I had a very pretty knack at picking out a viceroy.

CHAPTER XIII

GIL BLAS MEETS DON GASTON DE COGOLLOS AND DON ANDREW DE TORDESILLAS AT THE DRAWING-ROOM, AND ADJOURNS WITH THEM TO A MORE CONVENIENT PLACE. THE STORY OF DON GASTON AND DONNA HELENA DE GALISTEO CONCLUDED. SANTILLANE RENDERS SOME SERVICE TO TORDESILLAS

I was up to the hilts in joy at having so marvellously metamorphosed an ex-governor into a viceroy; the Lords of Leyva themselves were not primed and loaded so near to bursting. But very soon I had another opportunity of employing my credit in the beaten track of friendship; and there is the more occasion to quote these instances, that my readers may clearly discern with how different a train they are in company, from that graceless Gil Blas who, under the former ministry, carried on a shameless traffic in the honours and emoluments of the state.

One day I was waiting in the king's ante-chamber, in conversation with some noblemen, who, knowing me to stand well with the prime minister, were not ashamed of making me by the hand. In the crowd was Don Gaston de Cogollos, whom I had left a prisoner in the tower of Se-

govia. He was with Don Andrew de Tordesillas, the warden. I readily quitted my company to go and renew my acquaintance with my two friends. If they were astonished at the sight of me, I was no less so to find them here. After mutual greetings, Don Gaston said: Signor de Santillane, we have many inquiries to make of each other, and this place affords little opportunity for private intercourse; allow me to request your company where we may open our hearts freely. I made no objection; we pushed our way through the crowd, and left the palace. Don Gaston's carriage was ready waiting in the street; we all three got into it, and drove to the great market-place where the bull-fights are exhibited. There Cogollos lived in a very handsome house.

Signor Gil Blas, said Don Andrew on our entrance, at your departure from Segovia you seemed to have conceived a thorough hatred against the court, and to have formed a settled purpose of abandoning it for ever. Such was, in fact, my design, answered I; nor were my sentiments at all changed during the lifetime of the late king; but when the prince his son came to the throne, I had a mind to see whether the new monarch would know me again. He did so, and received me favourably, with a strong recommendation to the prime minister, who admitted me to his friendship, and took me more into his confidence than ever did the Duke of Lerma. This, Signor Don Andrew, is my story. And now tell me whether you still hold your office in the tower of Segovia. No, indeed! answered he; my lord duke has removed me, and put another in my room. He probably considered me as entirely devoted to his predecessor. And I, said Don Gaston, was set at liberty for the contrary reason; the prime minister was no sooner informed that my imprisonment was by the Duke of Lerma's order, than he ordered me to be released. The present business, Signor Gil Blas, is to relate the subsequent particulars of my adventures.

The first thing I did, continued he, after thanking Don Andrew for his kind attentions during my confinement, was to repair to Madrid. I presented myself before the Count Duke of Olivarez, who said: You need not be apprehensive of any blemish on your character in consequence of your late misfortune; you are honourably acquitted

ay, your innocence is so much the more satisfactorily stablished, as the Marquis of Villareal, with whom you ere supposed to be implicated, was not guilty. Though Portuguese, and related to the Duke of Braganza, he is ss in his interests than in those of the king my master. hat connection, therefore, ought not to have been imputed o you as a crime; but, to repair your wrongs, the king has ven you a lieutenant's commission in the Spanish guards. his I accepted, begging it as a favour of his excellency to low me, before I joined my regiment, to go and see my nt, Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla, at Coria. The min-ter gave me leave of absence for a month, and I departed ith only one servant.

'We had got beyond Colmenar, and were threading a arrow pass between two mountains, when we came within ght of a gentleman defending himself bravely against ree men, who all fell upon him together. I did not sitate about going to his aid; but hastened forward and anted myself by his side. I remarked while we were hting, that our enemies were masked, and that we had do with expert swordsmen. But we triumphed over e united advantages of their skill and disparity. I ran ae of the three through the body; he fell from his horse, d the two others immediately betook themselves to ght. The victory indeed was scarcely less fatal to us an to the wretch whom I had killed, for we were both ngerously wounded. But conceive my surprise, when discovered the gentleman to be Combados, the husband Donna Helena. He was no less astonished at recog-zing me as his defender. Ah, Don Gaston! exclaimed he, as it you, then, who came to my assistance? When u took my part so generously, you little thought it was e person who had snatched your mistress from you. I lly did not know it, answered I; but though I had, do u think I could have wavered about doing as I have ne? Can you entertain so ill an opinion of me, as to lieve my soul so sordid? No, no, replied he; I think better you; and should I die of my wounds, it will be my ayer that yours may not disable you from profiting by death. Combados, said I, though I have not yet gotten Donna Helena, know that I do not pant after the ssession of her charms at the expense of your life; so

far from it, that I congratulate myself on having con tributed to your rescue from assassination, since by s doing I have performed an acceptable service to your wife.

While we were communing together, my servant dis mounted; and drawing near to the gentleman stretche at his length, took off his mask, when Combados, wit sensations of gratitude for his deliverance, distinctl traced the features. It is Caprara, exclaimed he; tha treacherous cousin who, in mere disgust at having misse a rich inheritance which he had unjustly disputed with me has long since cherished a murderous design against m life, and fixed on this day to put it in execution; but heave has turned him over to its determined vengeance, and mad him the victim of his own attempt.

While this conversation was going on, our blood wa flowing at the same rate, and we were becoming more ex hausted every minute. Nevertheless, disabled as we were we had strength enough to reach the town of Villa réjo, which lies within gun-shot or two from the field o battle. At the very first house of call we sent for surgeons The most expert came at our summons. He examined ou wounds, and reported them as dangerous. After taking of the bandages and dressing them a second time, he pro nounced those of Don Blas to be mortal. Of mine h thought more favourably, and the event corresponde with his prognostic.

Combados, finding himself consigned to the grave thought only of due preparation for a most serious event He sent an express to his wife, with an account for wha had happened, particularizing his present sad condition Donna Helena soon arrived at Villaréjo. Her mind wa drawn different ways by two opposite occasions of distress the hazard of her husband's life, and the fear of feeling the revival of a half-extinguished flame at the sight of me This sight occasioned her to experience a terrible agitation Madam, said Don Blas, when she appeared in his presence you are come just in time to receive my farewell. I am a the point of death, and I consider my fate as a punishmen from heaven for having taken you from Don Gaston by a feint: far from murmuring at it, I exhort you with my last breath to restore to him a heart which I had stolen from him. Donna Helena answered him only by her tears: and

indeed it was the best answer she could make; for she had neither forgotten her first love, nor the artifices whereby she had been influenced to renounce her plighted faith.

It happened as the surgeon had anticipated, that in less than three days Combados died of his wounds, while mine on the contrary wore the appearance of convalescence. The young widow, whom no earthly considerations could detach from the care of transporting her late husband's remains to Coria, that they might be deposited with due honours in the family vault, left Villaréjo on her return, after inquiring, merely as a matter of course, how I was going on. As soon as I was well enough to be removed, I bent my course to Coria, where my recovery was soon ascertained. My aunt, Donna Eleonora, and Don George de Galisteo, were determined that my marriage with Helena should take place forthwith, lest some new caprice of fortune should part us once more. The ceremony was privately performed, on account of the late melancholy event, and within a few days I returned to Madrid with Donna Helena. As my leave of absence had expired, I was afraid lest the minister should have superseded me in my lieutenancy; but he had not filled up the vacancy, and received my apologies very graciously.

Thus am I, continued Cogollos, lieutenant of the Spanish guards, and my situation is exactly to my mind. The circle of my friends is respectable and pleasant, and I live at my ease among them. Would I could say as much! exclaimed Don Andrew: but I am very far from being satisfied with my lot; I have lost my appointment, which was not without its advantages, and have no friends of sufficient interest to procure me a better berth. Excuse me, signor Don Andrew, cried I, with a sort of upbraiding smile, you have a friend in me who may chance to be better than no friend at all. I have told you already that I am a greater favourite with my lord duke than with the Duke of Lerma; and will you tell me to my face that you have no interest at court? Have you not already experienced the contrary? Recollect that, through the archbishop of Grenada's powerful recommendation, I procured you a nomination for Mexico, where you would have made your fortune, if love had not stepped in and marred it at Alicant. My means are now more extensive,

since I have the ear of the prime minister. I give myse up to you then, replied Tordesillas; but do not send n into New Spain, though the first appointment in the coloni were at your disposal.

Here we were interrupted by Donna Helena, who can into the room, and improved even upon the visions of m fancy by the reality of her charms. Cogollos introduce me as the companion who had solaced the tedious hou of his imprisonment. Yes, madam, said I to Donn Helena, my conversation did indeed soothe his sorrows, f it turned on you. The compliment was not thrown awa and I took my leave with repeated congratulations. Wit respect to Tordesillas, I assured him that within a week h should know how far my power as well as will extended.

Nor were these mere words. On the very next day, th opportunity occurred. Santillane, said his excellency, th place of governor in the royal prison of Valladolid is vacan it is worth more than three hundred pistoles a year; and yours if you will accept of it. Not if it were worth te thousand ducats, answered I, for it would carry me awa from your lordship. But, replied the minister, you ma fill it by deputy, and only visit occasionally. That is as may be, rejoined I; but I shall only accept it on conditio of resigning in favour of Don Andrew de Tordesillas, a brav and loyal gentleman; I should like to give him this place i acknowledgment of his kindness to me in the tower of Segovi

This plea made the minister laugh heartily, and say As far as I see, Gil Blas, you mean to make yourself general patron. Even so be it, my friend; the vacancy yours for Tordesillas; but tell me unfeignedly what fellow feeling you have in the business, for you are not such a fo as to throw away your interest for nothing. My lor answered I, Don Andrew charged me nothing for all h acts of friendship, and should not a man repay his oblig tions? You are become highly moral and self-mortifie replied his excellency; rather more so than under the las administration. Precisely so, rejoined I; then evil com munication corrupted my principles; bargain and sale wer the order of the day, and I conformed to the establishe practice: now, all preferment is allotted on the footing of meritorious free gift, and my integrity shall not be the las to fall in with the fashion.

CHAPTER XIV

ANTILLANE'S VISIT TO POET NUNEZ, THE COMPANY AND CONVERSATION

ONE day, after dinner, a fancy seized me to go and see the oet of the Asturias, feeling a sort of curiosity to know on hat floor he lodged. I repaired to the house of Signor Don ertrand Gomez del Ribero, and asked for Nunez. He oes not live here now, said the porter, but over the way, in partments at the back of the house. I went thither, and ossing a small court, entered an unfurnished parlour, here my friend Fabricio was sitting at table, doing the nours to five or six guests from the hamlet and liberty Parnassus.

They were at the latter end of a feast, and of course at e beginning of an affray; but as soon as they perceived e, a dead silence succeeded to their obstreperous argu- entation. Nunez rose from his seat with much pomp and rcumstance of politeness to receive me, saying: Gentle- en, Signor de Santillane! He does me the honour to sit me under his humble roof; as the favourite of the ime minister, you will all join with me in tendering ur humble services. At this introduction, the worship- l company got up and made their best bows; for my rank uld not fail of procuring me respect from the manu- cturers of dedications. Though I was neither hungry nor rsty, it was impossible not to sit down and drink a toast such society.

My presence appearing to be a restraint, Gentlemen, said t should seem that I have interrupted your conversation: ume it, or you drive me away. My learned friends, d Fabricio, were discussing the "Iphigenia" of Euri- es. The bachelor, Melchior de Villégas, a clever man he first rank in the republic of letters, resumed the topic asking Don Jacinto de Romerate which was the point of erest in that tragedy. Don Jacinto ascribed it to the minent danger of Iphigenia. The bachelor contended, ring to prove his proposition by all the evidence ad- sible at the bar of logic or criticism, that the danger trumpery girl had nothing to do with the real sympathy

of that affecting piece. What has to do with it then
bawled the old licentiate Gabriel of Leon indignantly. I
turns with the wind, replied the bachelor.

The whole company burst into a shout of laughter at this
assertion, which they were far from considering as serious
and I myself thought that Melchior had only launched it
by way of adding the zest of wit to the severity of critica
discussion. But I was out in my calculation respecting the
character of that eminent scholar: he had not a grain o
sprightliness or pleasantry in his whole composition
Laugh as you please, gentlemen, replied he, very coolly
I maintain that there is no circumstance but the wind
unless it be the weathercock, to interest, to strike, to rouse
the passions of the spectator. Figure to yourselves a
multitudinous army, assembled for the purpose of laying
siege to Troy; take into account the eager haste of the officers
and common men to carry their enterprise into execution
that they may return with their best legs foremost into
Greece, where they have left everything most dear to them
their household gods, their wives and their children: al
this while a mischievous wind from the wrong quarter keeps
them port-bound at Aulis, and, as it were, drives a nail
into the very head of the expedition; so that till better
weather, it was impossible to go and lay siege to Priam's
town. Wind and weather therefore make up the interest
of this tragedy. My good wishes are with the Greeks: my
whole faculties are wrapped up in the success of their
design; the sailing of their fleet is with me the only hinge of
the fable, and I look at the danger of Iphigenia with some
what of a self-interested complacency, because by her
death the winding up of the story into a brisk and favour
able gale was likely to be accelerated.

As soon as Villégas had finished his criticism, the laugh
burst out more than ever, at his expense. Nunez was sly
enough to side with him, that a fairer scope and broader
mark might be presented to the shafts of malicious wit
which were let fly from all the quarters in the shipman's card
at this poster of the sea and land. But the bachelor
eyeing them all with sublime indifference and supreme
contempt, gave them to understand how low in the list of
the ignorant and vulgar they ranked in his estimation
Every moment did I expect to see these vapouring spirits

kindle into a blaze, and wage war against the hairy honours of each other's brainless skulls: but the joke was not carried o that length; they confined their hostilities to opprobrious epithets, and took their leave when they had eaten and drunk as much as they could get.

After their departure, I asked Fabricio why he had eparated himself from his treasurer, and whether they had uarrelled. Quarrelled! answered he: Heaven defend me rom such a misfortune! I am on better terms than ever ith Signor Don Bertrand, who gave his consent to my ving apart from him: here therefore I receive my friends, nd take my pleasure with them unmolested. You know ery well that I am not of a temper to lay up treasures for hose who are to come after me; and as it happens luckily, am now in circumstances to give my little classical enterainments every day. I am delighted at it, my dear Nunez, pplied I, and once more wish you joy on the success of your st tragedy: the great Lope, by his eight hundred dramatic ieces, never made a quarter of the money which you have ot by the damnation of your "Count de Saldagna."

BOOK THE TWELFTH

CHAPTER I

L BLAS SENT TO TOLEDO BY THE MINISTER. THE PURPOSE OF HIS JOURNEY AND ITS SUCCESS

For nearly a month his excellency had been saying to e every day: Santillane, the time is approaching, when I all call your choicest powers of address unto action; but e time that was coming never came. It is a long lane, wever, where there is no turning; and his excellency at gth spoke to me nearly as follows: They say that there in the company of comedians at Toledo, a young actress much note for her personal and professional fascinations; s affirmed that she dances and sings like all the muses l graces put together, and that the whole theatre rings h applause at her performance: to these perfections is ded matchless and irresistible beauty. Such a star should

only shine within the circle of a court. The king has a taste for the stage, for music, and for dancing: nor must he be debarred from the pleasure of seeing and hearing such a prodigy. I have determined on sending you to Toledo, that you may judge for yourself whether she really is so extraordinary an actress: on your feeling of her merit my measures shall be taken; for I have unlimited confidence in your discernment.

I undertook to bring his lordship a good account of this business, and made my arrangements for setting out with one servant, but not in the minister's livery, by way of conducting matters more warily; and that precaution relished well with his excellency. On my arrival at Toledo, I had scarcely alighted at the inn, when the landlord, taking me for some country gentleman, said: Please your honour, you are probably come to be present at the august ceremony of an Auto da Fé to-morrow. I answered in the affirmative, the more completely to mislead him, and keep my own counsel. You will see, replied he, one of the prettiest processions you ever saw in your life: there are said to be more than a hundred prisoners, and ten of them are to be roasted.

In good truth, next morning, before sun-rise, I heard all the bells in the town peal merrily; and the design of their bob-majors was to acquaint the people that the pastime was about to begin. Curious to see what sort of a recreation it was, I dressed in a hurry, and posted to the scene of action. All about that quarter, and along the streets where the procession was to pass, were scaffolds, on one of which I purchased a standing. The Dominicans walked first, preceded by the banner of the Inquisition. These Christian fathers were immediately followed by the hapless victims of the holy office, selected for this day's burnt-offering. These devoted wretches walked one by one, with their head and feet bare, each of them with a taper in his hand, and a fiery, not baptismal godfather by his side. Some had large yellow scapularies, worked with crosses of St Andrew, in red; others wore sugar-loaf caps of paper, illustrated with flames, and diabolical figures of all sorts by way of emblem.

As I looked narrowly at these objects of religious gaze, with a compassion in my heart which might have been construed criminal, had it run over from my eyes, I fancied

at the reverend Father Hilary and his companion brother mbrose were among those who figured in the sugar-loaf ps. They passed too near for me to be deceived. What o I see? thought I inwardly: heaven, wearied out with the icked lives of these two scoundrels, has given them up to ae justice of the Inquisition! My whole frame trembled : the thought, and my spirits were scarcely equal to sup- ort me from fainting. My connection with these knaves, ae adventure at Xelva, all our pranks in partnership ashed upon my memory, and I did not know how suffi- ently to thank God for having preserved me from St ndrew's crosses and the painted devils on the paper caps.

When the ceremony was over I returned to the inn, with ny heart sickening at the dreadful sight; but painful im- ressions soon wear away, and I thought only of my com- ission and its due accomplishment. I waited with im- atience for play-time, as the moment and scene of my ommencing operations. On the opening of the doors I epaired to the theatre, and took my seat next to a knight f Alcantara. We soon got into chat. Sir, said I, the layers here have been represented to me in very favourable erms: may I give credit to general report? The company s not contemptible, replied the knight: they have some irst-rate performers; among the rest, the peerless Lucretia, n actress of fourteen, who will astonish you: and she plays ne of her best parts to-night.

On the drawing up of the curtain, two actresses came on, with every advantage of dress and stage effect: but neither of them could possibly be the object of my search. At ength Lucretia made her appearance at the back scene, and walked forwards amidst a thunder of applause. Ah! this s she, indeed! thought I? and a delicate specimen of oveliness, as I am a sinner! In her very first speech she proved herself a child of nature, with energy and concep- tion far above her years; and the approbation of a pro- vincial audience was confirmed by my metropolitan judg- ment. The knight was happy to find I liked her, and assured me that if I had heard her sing, my ears might have rejoiced to the sorrow of my heart. Her dancing, too, he represented as not less formidable to the free will of lordly man. I inquired what youth, blessed as the immortal gods, had the exquisite happiness of bringing himself to

beggary for so sweet a girl. She is under no avowed pr
tection, said he; and scandal has not coupled her nan
with private licence; but Lucretia must take care of he
self, for she is under the wing of her aunt Estella; and the
is not an actress in the company so warmly fledged f
hatching the tender passions into life.

At the name of Estella, I inquired with some eagerne
who she was. One of our best performers, said my info
mant. She does not play to-night, to our great loss, f
her cast is that of abigails, and she humours them to pe
fection. A little too broad, perhaps, but that is a fault c
the right side. From the features of the description, the
could be no doubt but this must be Laura; that lady
notorious in these memoirs, whom I left at Grenada.

To make assurance doubly sure, I went behind the scen
after the play. There she was, in the green-room, flirtin
with some men of fashion, who probably endured th
aunt for the sake of the niece. I came up to pay my dev
tions; but whim, or perhaps revenge for my cutting an
running from Grenada, determined her to put on th
stranger, and receive my compliments with so discouragin
a coldness, as to throw me into some little confusio
Instead of laughing it off, I was fool enough to be angry
and withdrew in a choleric determination to return nex
day. Laura shall smart for this! said I; her niece sha
not appear at court; I will tell the minister that she dance
like a she bear, has formed her *bravura* between the screar
of a pea-hen and the cackle of a goose, acts like a puppe
and comprehends like an idiot.

Such was my scheme of revenge, but it proved abo
tive. Just as I was going out of town, a footboy brough
me the following note: "Forget and forgive, and follo
the bearer." I obeyed, and found Laura at her dressing
table in very elegant apartments near the theatre.

She rose to welcome me, saying: Signor Gil Blas, yo
have every reason to be offended at your reception behin
the scenes, which was out of character between suc
old friends, but I really was most abominably discon
certed. Just as you came up, one of our gentlemen ha
brought me some scandalous stories about my niece, whos
honour has always been dearer to me than my own. O
coming to myself, I immediately sent my servant to find

you out, with the intention of making you amends to-day. You have done so already, my dear Laura, said I, let us therefore talk over old times. You may remember that I left you in a very ticklish predicament, when conscience and the fear of punishment drove me so precipitately from Grenada. How did you get off with your Portuguese lover? Easily enough, answered Laura: do not you know that in those cases men are mere fools, and acquit us women without even calling for our defence?

I faced the Marquis of Marialva out, that you were my very brother, and drew upon my impudence for the support of my credit. Do you not see, said I to my Portuguese dupe, that this is all the contrivance of jealousy and rage? My rival, Narcissa, infuriated at my possession of a heart which she had vainly attempted to gain, has bribed the candle-snuffer to assert that he has seen me as Arsenia's waiting-woman at Madrid. It is an abominable falsehood; the widow of Don Antonio Coello has always been too high in her notions, to be the hanger-on of a theatrical mistress. Besides, what completely disproves the whole allegation, is my brother's precipitate retreat: if he were here, it would be a subject of evidence; but Narcissa must have devised some stratagem to get him out of the way.

These reasons, continued Laura, were not the most convincing in the world, but they did very well for the marquis; and that good, easy nobleman continued his confidence till his return to Portugal. This happened soon after your departure; and Zapata's wife had the pleasure of seeing me lose what she could not win. After this, I stayed some years longer at Grenada, till the company was broken up in consequence of some squabbles, which will take place in mimic as well as in real life: some went to Seville, others to Cordova; and I came to Toledo, where I have been for these ten years with my niece Lucretia, whose performance you must have seen last night.

This was too much to be taken gravely. Laura inquired why I laughed. Can that be a question? said I. You have neither brother nor sister, one or other of which is a necessary ingredient in an aunt. Besides, when I calculate in my mind the lapse of time since our last separation, and compare that period with the age of your niece,

it is more than possible that your relationship may be nearer degree of kin.

I understand you, replied Don Antonio's widow, w something like a moral tinge of red in her cheek; you an accurate chronologist! There is no garbling facts defiance of your memory. Well, then! Lucretia is daughter by the Marquis of Marialva: it was extrem wrong, but I cannot conceal it from you. The confess must indeed be a shock to your modesty, said I, af telling me yourself what pranks you played with hospital steward at Zamora. I must tell you moreo that Lucretia is an article of so superior a quality as to ren you a public benefactor by having thrown her into market. It were to be wished that the stolen embraces all your fraternity might be blessed with fruitfulness they could secure to themselves a patent for breeding af your sample.

Should any sarcastic reader, comparing this passage w some circumstances related while I was the marqu secretary, suspect me of being entitled to dispute honours of paternity with that nobleman, I blush to s that my claims are entirely out of the question.

I laid open my principal adventures to Laura in turn, as well as the present state of my affairs. She listen with interest, and said: Friend Santillane, you seem to p a principal part on the stage of the world, and I c gratulate you most heartily. Should Lucretia be engag at Madrid, I flatter myself she will find a powerful protec in Signor de Santillane. Doubt it not, answered I: yo daughter may have her engagement whenever you plea I can promise you that, without presuming too much my interest. I take you at your word, replied Lau and would set out to-morrow, were I not under artic to this company. An order from court will cut the k of any articles, rejoined I; and that I take upon myse you shall have it within a week. It is an act of chiva to rescue Lucretia from Toledo: such a pretty little actr belongs to the royal court, as parcel of the manor.

Lucretia came into the room just as I was talking of h The goddess Hebe herself never looked better in her best da it was nature in the bud, exhaling the sweets of her earli bloom, but promising a more luxuriant waste of treasu

she was just up; and her natural beauty, without the aid of art, communicated the most rapturous sensations. Come, niece, said her mother, thank the gentleman for all his kindness to us: he is an old friend of mine, who ranks high at court, and undertakes to get us both an engagement at the theatre royal. The little girl seemed to be much pleased, and made me a low curtsey, saying with an enchanting smile: I most humbly thank you for your obliging intention; but, by taking me from a partial audience, are you certain that I shall not be looked down upon by that of Madrid? I may but lose by the exchange. I remember hearing my aunt say, that she has seen players most favourably received in one town, and hissed off the stage in another; this absolutely frightens me; beware therefore of exposing me to the derision of the court, and yourself to its reproaches. Lovely Lucretia, answered I, we have neither of us anything to fear; I am rather apprehensive lest, by the havoc you will make among hearts, you should excite rivalships and kindle discord among the courtiers. My niece's fears, said Laura, are better founded than yours; but I hope they will both prove vain: however feeble may be Lucretia's charms of person, her talents as an actress are at least above mediocrity.

We continued the conversation for some time: and I could gather, from Lucretia's share in it, that she was a girl of superior talents. On taking leave, I assured them that they should immediately receive a summons to Madrid.

CHAPTER II

SANTILLANE MAKES HIS REPORT TO THE MINISTER, WHO COMMISSIONS HIM TO SEND FOR LUCRETIA. THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THAT ACTRESS BEFORE THE COURT

On my return, I found my lord duke impatient to be informed of my success. Have you seen her? said he: is she worth transplanting? My lord, answered I, fame, which generally runs beyond all discretion in its report of beauty, has erred on the side of parsimony in its estimate of the matchless young Lucretia; she is all that youthful poets fancy when they feign, for personal attractions,

and all that veteran managers seek when they sign articl in scenic qualifications.

Is it possible? exclaimed the minister with a satisfa tion which involuntarily peeped out at his eyes, a made me think he had some selfish hankerings after t article of my marketing at Toledo; is it possible? and she really so charming a creature? When you see her, plied I, you will own that any verbal picture of her p fections must be altogether inadequate to their due descr tion. His excellency then requiring a minute account my journey, I gave him all the particulars, not excepti Laura's story, and Lucretia's parentage. His lordsh was delighted at the latter circumstance, and enjoined n with a cordial compliment on my skill in such delica negociations, to finish as auspiciously as I had begun r undertaking.

I went to look for Carnero, and told him that it was excellency's pleasure he should make out an order for t admission of Estella and Lucretia, actresses from t Toledo theatre, into his majesty's company. Say you Signor de Santillane? answered Carnero with a sarcas leer; you shall not be kept long in suspense, since you ta so marked an interest in the fortunes of these two ladi He expedited the order in my presence, and within a we the mother and daughter sent me notice of their arriv I immediately hastened to their lodging near the theat and after an interchange of thanks on their part, a assurances of continued support on mine, left them with r best wishes for a brilliant career of success.

Their names were announced in the bills as two n actresses, engaged by the special mandate of the cou They made their first appearance in a play, which th had been accustomed to perform in at Toledo with lo and unanimous applause.

Novelty is the very life and soul of theatrical ent tainments. The house was uncommonly crowded, and of course was among the audience. I was rather frigh ened before the curtain drew up. Prejudiced as I was favour of the candidates, my alarm was in proportion to r interest. But when once they were fairly on the boar the din of welcome quieted all my apprehensions. Este was considered as a first-rate actress in comic parts, a

Lucretia as a female Roscius in heroines and love-sick damsels. But the love which she feigned herself, she really kindled in the hearts of the spectators. Some admired the beauty of her eyes, others were touched with the plaintive sweetness of her voice, and all, bowing to the triumph of youth, vivacity, and elegance, went away in raptures with her person.

My lord duke, who took an uncommon interest in this theatrical event, was at the play that evening. I saw him leave his box at the end of the piece, with evident approbation of our new performers. Curious to know whether they equalled his expectations, I followed him home, and into his closet, saying: Well, my lord, is your excellency well pleased with little Marialva? My excellency, answered he with a sly smile, must be very difficult to be pleased, not to confirm the public voice: yes, indeed, my good friend, I am enraptured with your Lucretia, and firmly believe that the king will not see her without emotion.

CHAPTER III

LUCRETIA'S POPULARITY; HER APPEARANCE BEFORE THE KING; HIS PASSION, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

GREAT was the noise about the court on this double acquisition to the theatre; it became the topic of conversation next day at the king's levee. The young Lucretia was most in the mouths of the nobility, who described her so feelingly, that his majesty could not but imbibe the impression, though he was too politic to express his interest either in words or by looks.

To make amends for that restraint, he questioned the minister as soon as he was alone with him, who stated the success of a young actress from Toledo on the evening before. Her name, added he, is Lucretia; and it is really a pity that ladies of her profession should ever have been christened by any less chaste appellative. She is an acquaintance of Santillane, who spoke so highly of her, that I thought it right to engage her for your majesty's company. The king smiled at the mention of my name, recollecting, perhaps, through what channel he became

acquainted with Catalina, and foreboding a like assistan on the present occasion. Count, said he to the minist I mean to see this Lucretia act to-morrow, and will tha you to let her know it.

I was of course sent with this intelligence to the t actresses. Great news! said I to Laura, whom I saw firs you will have the sovereign of the Spanish monarc among your audience to-morrow, as the minister h desired me to inform you. I cannot doubt but you w both of you do your best to prove yourselves worthy a royal command; but I would advise you to choose piece with music and dancing, that all Lucretia's acco plishments may be displayed at one view. We will ta your counsel, answered Laura, and it shall not be o faults if his majesty is disappointed. That can scarce happen, said I, seeing Lucretia come into the room in undress, which shewed her person to more advanta than all the wardrobe of the theatre: he will be the mo delighted with your lovely niece, because dancing a music are his principal pleasures: he may even be tempt to throw her the handkerchief. I do not at all wis replied Laura, that he should be that way inclined; a powerful monarch as he is, he might not find the acco plishment of his desires so easy. Lucretia, though broug up behind the scenes, is not without virtuous principle whatever pleasure she may take in applause and profe sional reputation, she had much rather preserve the cha acter of a good girl, than establish that of a great actress.

Aunt, said little Marialva, joining in the conversatio why conjure up monsters only to lay them again? shall never be at a loss to repel the king's advances, becau his taste is too refined to stoop so low. But, charmi Lucretia, said I, if such a thing should happen, would y be cruel enough to let him languish like a common love Why not? answered she. Setting virtue aside, my vani would be more flattered by my own resistance than by t tribute of his affection. I was not a little surprised to he a pupil of Laura's school talk so properly, and to find th with so free an education she imbibed such unusual pri ciples of morality.

The king, impatient to see Lucretia, went to the play ne evening. The piece was got up with music and dancin

to shew our young actress off to the best advantage. My eyes were fixed on his majesty; but he completely eluded my penetration by an obstinate gravity. On the following day, the minister said: Santillane, I have just been with the king, who has been talking about Lucretia, with so much animation, that I doubt not but he is smitten: and, as I told him that you had sent for her from Toledo, he expressed a wish to confer with you in private on the subject: orders are given for your admittance; run, and bring me back an account of what passes.

I flew to the palace, and found the king alone. He was walking up and down, in much apparent perplexity. He put several questions to me about Lucretia, made me relate her history, and then asked whether the little jade had not been tampering with chastity already. I boldly assured him to the contrary, though such pledges were somewhat hazardous in general; but mine was taken, and gave the prince much pleasure. If so, replied he, I select you for my agent with Lucretia; let her become acquainted with her triumph from your lips. He then put a box of jewels into my hand, worth fifty thousand crowns, with a message begging her acceptance of them, and promising more substantial proofs of his affection.

Before I went on my errand, I reported progress to my lord duke. That minister, I thought, would be more vexed than rejoiced at it; supposing that he had his own views of gallantry towards Lucretia, and would learn with regret the rivalship of his master; but I was mistaken. Far from appearing chagrined, his joy was so excessive, that it would ooze out at his tongue, in words which were not quite lost on the hearer. "Indeed, friend Philip! then I have you in my clutches: while your pleasures lead you, your business must be left to me!" This side speech explained to me the plot; an amorous prince, and a long-headed minister! My orders were to execute my commission as speedily as possible, with the assurance that the first lord in the land would be proud to stand in my shoes. Besides, there was no pimp of rank, as in the former case, to seize the profit and leave the infamy with me; the honour and emolument were now exclusively my own.

Thus did his excellency relish the ingredients of pandarism to my palate; and I tasted them with the greediness,

but not without the qualms of an epicure; for since my in
prisonment I had become regenerate, and did not tak
pride in dirty work, because my employer washed h
hands in perfumed water. But though conscience wa
awake, interest was not asleep. I was no longer a villai
for the fun of it; but my compliance would confirm m
footing with the minister, and him it was my duty, at a
events, to please.

My first appeal was to Laura in private. I opened th
negociation delicately, and presented my credentials in th
form of the jewel-box. The lady was thrown off her guar
by the display. Signor Gil Blas, cried she, you are one
my oldest friends, and I must not play the hypocrite: strai
laced morals are inconsistent with the discipline of my sec
Nothing can be more delightful to me than a conques
which throws such a game into our hands. But, betwee
ourselves, I am afraid Lucretia is not so enlightened a
we are; though a daughter of Thalia, she has taken th
better-behaved goddesses for her school-mistresses, an
given a rebuff to two young noblemen of amiable manne
and large fortunes. They were not kings, you will sa
and truly we may hope that Lucretia's virtue will be to
undisciplined to stand a royal siege; but you must remem
ber the event is hazardous, and I shall not interpose m
authority to compel her. If, far from thinking herse
honoured by the fleeting passion of the king, she shoul
revolt from his advances with disdain, let not our illu
trious sovereign be offended at her reserve. But do yo
come back hither to-morrow, and carry back either th
jewels, or a return of affection.

I had no doubt but Laura would tutor Lucretia in th
school of time-serving morality, and depended much o
her instruction. It was therefore no small surprise to fin
that Laura worked as much against wind and tide to launc
her daughter into the trade-wind of evil, as other matern
pilots to set the sails of theirs in the contrary monsoon
good; and what is still more unaccountable, Lucretia, aft
tasting of royal delights, was so completely surfeited wit
the banquet as to throw herself at once into the arms of th
church, where she professed, fell sick, and died of grie
Laura, disconsolate for the loss of her daughter, and th
part she herself had acted in the tragedy, retired into

convent of female penitents, and did penance for the unhallowed pleasures of her former life. The king was affected by his sudden loss, but soon found comfort in some other pursuit. The premier talked little on the subject, but thought so much the more, as the reader will easily believe.

CHAPTER IV

SANTILLANE IN A NEW OFFICE

My feelings were all alive to Lucretia's ill fate, and my own infamy in having contributed to it. The royal wants of the lover were no excuse for my taking the post of cheapener, and I determined to resign the staff of office in that department, entreating the minister to employ me in some other. He was charmed with my nice sense of honour, and promised to comply with my scruples, laying open his inmost heart in the following speech.

Some years before I was in office, chance threw me across a lady of such shape and beauty as induced me to trace her home. I learned that she was a Genoese, by name Donna Margarita Spinola, supporting herself at Madrid on the income arising from her beauty. It was reported that Don Francisco de Valéasar, an officer about the court, a rich man, an old man, and a married man, laid out his money very freely on this hazardous speculation. These rumours ought to have deterred me; but they only whetted my desires to share with Valéasar. To gain my end, I had recourse to a female broker of tenderness, who adjusted the terms of a private interview with the Genoese; and the price current being settled, the traffic was frequently repeated; it was an open market for my rival and me, or possibly for many other bidders.

Let that be as it may, a choice boy was in the fulness of time produced to the club, and the mother complimented every member individually in private with the credit: but we were each of us too modest to acknowledge a bantling which had so probable a claim upon a better father; so that the Genoese was compelled to maintain him on the profits of her profession: this she did for eighteen years, and dying at the end of that period, has left her son without a

farthing, and what is worse, without an idea or an accom plishment.

Such, continued his lordship, is the confidence I mean to repose in you, and I shall now lay open the great desig I have formed, to draw this unfortunate child from h obscurity, reverse the colour of his fate, raise him to th highest honours, and acknowledge him as my son.

At so extravagant a project it was impossible not to b open-mouthed. What, sir, exclaimed I, can your ex cellency have adopted so strange a resolution? Excus my freedom; but my zeal cannot restrain itself. You wi be of my mind, replied he with eagerness, when I shall hav explained to you my motives. I have no mind that m estates should descend in the collateral line. You will te me, that I am not so old as to despair of having children b Madame d'Olivarez. But every one is best judge of h own condition: know therefore that there is not a recei in the whole extent of chemistry which I have not tried, bu without effect, to appear once again in the character of father. Wherefore, since fortune, stepping in to cover th defects of nature, presents me with a child whose paren after all I may actually be, he is mine by adoption; that a settled point.

When I found the minister determined, I no longer argue against his resolution, as knowing him to be a man wh would rather do a foolish act of his own, than adopt a wis suggestion of another. It only remains now, added he, t educate Don Henry Philip de Guzman; for by that name intend him to be known in the world, till the time arrive when he may aspire to higher dignities. You, my dea Santillane, I have chosen to superintend his conduct: have full confidence in your talents and friendship, t regulate his household, direct his studies, and make him a accomplished gentleman. I would willingly have decline the office, as never having exercised the craft of a peda gogue, which required much more genius and solidity tha mine; but he shut my mouth by saying it was his absolu determination that I should be tutor to this adopted so whom he designed for the first offices of the monarchy. A a bribe for my compliance, his lordship increased my litt income with a pension of a thousand crowns on the com mandery of Mambra.

CHAPTER V

THE SON OF THE GENOESE IS ACKNOWLEDGED BY A LEGAL INSTRUMENT, AND NAMED DON HENRY PHILIP DE GUZMAN. SANTILLANE ESTABLISHES HIS HOUSEHOLD, AND ARRANGES THE COURSE OF HIS STUDIES

THE act of adoption was soon legalized with the king's consent and good pleasure. Don Henry Philip de Guzman, as this descendant from a committee of fathers was named, became acknowledged successor to the earldom of Olivarez and the duchy of San Lucar. The minister, to give the act all possible publicity, communicated it through Carnero to the ambassadors and grandees of Spain, who were somewhat startled. The jokers of Madrid were not insensible to the ridicule, and the satirical poets made their harvest of so fine a subject for their pen.

I asked my lord duke where my pupil was. Here in town, answered he, with an aunt from whom I shall remove him as soon as you have got a house ready. This I did immediately, and furnished it magnificently. When my establishment was complete in servants and officers, his excellency sent for this equivocal production, this spurious offset from the renowned stock of the Guzmans. The lad was tall and personable. Don Henry, said his lordship, pointing to me, this gentleman is to be your tutor and introduce you into the world; he has my entire confidence, and an unlimited authority over you. After much good advice, and many compliments to me, the minister retired, and I took Don Henry home.

As soon as we got thither, I introduced him to his household, and explained the nature of each individual's employment. He did not seem at all disconcerted at the change of circumstances, but received the obeisances of his dependants as if he had been a lord by nature, and not by chance. He was not without mother-wit, but ignorant in a deplorable degree; he could scarcely read and write. I gave him masters for the Latin grammar, geography, history, and fencing. A dancing-master of course was not forgotten; but in an affair of the first consequence, selection was difficult, for there were more eminent professors of that art in

Madrid than of all the languages and sciences put to gether.

While I was pondering on this difficulty, a man gaudil dressed came into the court-yard and inquired for me. went down, supposing him to be at least a knight of som military or privileged order. Signor de Santillane, said he with a profusion of bows which anticipated his line in life, am come to offer you my services as Don Henry's governo My name is Martin Ligero, and I have, thank heaven, som reputation in the world. I have no occasion to canvass fo scholars; that is all very well for petty dancing-masters My custom is to wait till I am sent for; but being a sort o appendage to the house of Guzman, and having taught it various branches for a long period, I thought it a point o respect to wait on you first. I perceive, answered I, tha you are just the man we want. What are your terms Four double pistoles a month, answered he, and I give bu two lessons a week. Four doubloons a month! cried I, tha is an exorbitant price. Exorbitant! rejoined he wit astonishment; why, it is not more than eight times as muc as you would give to a mathematical master or a Gree professor.

There was no resisting so ludicrous a comparison of merit I laughed outright, and asked Signor Ligero whether h really thought his talents worth more than those of the firs proficients in learning and science. Most assuredly, said he at least, if you measure our pretensions by their respectiv utility. What sort of machines may those be which ar fashioned under their hands? Jointless puppets, unlicke cubs, open-mouthed and impenetrable shell-fish; but ou lessons supple and render pliant the intractable stiffness o their component parts, and bring them insensibly into shape in short, we communicate to them a graceful motion, polite address, the carriage of good company, and the out ward marks of elevated rank.

I could not but give way to such cogent arguments i favour of the dancing-master's occupation, and engage him about Don Henry's person without haggling as to term since those specified were only at the rate established by th leading professors of the art.

CHAPTER VI

SCIPIO'S RETURN FROM NEW SPAIN. GIL BLAS PLACES HIM ABOUT DON HENRY'S PERSON. THAT YOUNG NOBLEMAN'S COURSE OF STUDY. HIS CAREER OF HONOUR, AND HIS FATHER'S MATRIMONIAL SPECULATION ON HIS BEHALF. A PATENT OF NOBILITY CONFERRED ON GIL BLAS AGAINST HIS WILL

I HAD not yet half arranged Don Henry's household, when Scipio returned from Mexico. He brought with him three thousand ducats in cash, and merchandise to double the amount. I wish you joy, said I; the foundation of your fortune is laid; and if you prefer a snug berth at Madrid to the risk of going back, you have only to tell me so. There is no question about that, said the son of Coselina: a genteel situation at home is far preferable to a second voyage.

After relating the birth and adventures of the little adopted Guzman, and my own appointment as tutor, I offered him the situation of upper servant to this babe of chance: Scipio, who could have devised nothing better for himself, readily accepted the office, and within the small space of three or four days got the length of his new master's foot.

I had taken it for granted that the verb-grinders and concord-manufacturers to whom I had given the plant of this Genoese bastard would lose stock and block, under the idea that he was of an intractable and profitless age; but my forebodings were completely reversed. He not only comprehended, but easily retained the lessons of his masters, and they were very well satisfied with him. I was in an enormous hurry to greet the ears of my lord duke with this intelligence, and he received it with abundant joy. Santillane, exclaimed he with delight, you give me new life by the assurance of Don Henry's capacity and application: it runs in the blood of the Guzmans; and I am the more confirmed in his being unquestionably my own, because I am just as fond of him as if Madame d'Olivarez herself had lain in of the brat in due form under this very roof. The voice of nature, you perceive, will make itself heard. I thought it unnecessary to give his lordship any opinion on that subject; but with a delicate deference to his credulity, left him to

enjoy his fancied paternity in peace, whether well or
founded.

Though all the Guzmans held this clod of newly turn
up nobility in utter scorn, they were politic enough to smoo
over the corrugations of their contempt; nay, some of the
even affected to languish for his good opinion: the ambass
dors and principal nobility then at Madrid waited on hi
with all the ceremony appertaining to the rank of a legi
mate son. The minister, intoxicated with the fumes
incense offered to his idol, began to build a temple wort
of the worship. The cross of Alcantara was the foundatio
with a commandery of ten thousand crowns. The ne
step was to a high office in the royal household, and t
completion of the whole was matrimony. Wishing to co
nect him with a family of the first rank, he picked out Don
Johanna de Velasco, daughter to the Duke of Castile, a
had influence enough to accomplish the alliance, thou
against the will of the Duke and of all his kindred.

Some days before the nuptial ceremony, his lordship p
some papers into my hand, saying: Here, Gil Blas, is a pate
of nobility which I have procured as the reward of yo
services. My lord, answered I, in much astonishment, yo
excellency knows very well that I am the son of an usher a
a duenna: it would be caricaturing the peerage to confer
on me; and besides, of all the boons in his majesty's pow
to bestow, it is that which I deserve and desire the leas
Your birth, replied the minister, is a slight objection. Y
have been employed on affairs of state under the Duke
Lerma's administration and under mine: besides, added
with a smile, have you not rendered some things to Cæsa
which Cæsar is bound, on the honour of a prince, to rend
back in another shape? To deal candidly, Santillane, y
will make just as good a lord as the best of them; nay, mo
than that, your high office about my son is incompatible wi
plebeian rank, and therefore have I procured you to
created. Since your excellency will have it so, replied
there is no more to be said. So, saying no more, I put n
new-blown honours in my pocket, and walked off.

Now can I make any Joan a lady! said I to myself when
had got into the street: but it was not the handy-work
my parents that made me a gentleman. I may add a fo
of honour to my name whenever I please; and if any of n

acquaintance should snuff or snigger when they call me Don, I may suck my teeth, lean upon my elbow, and draw out my credentials of heraldry. But let us see what they contain; and how the corporeal particles, which have accrued during my artificial contact with the court, are distinguished by genealogical metaphysics from the native clay of my original extraction. The instrument ran thus in substance: That the king in acknowledgment of my zeal in more than one instance for his service and the good of the state, had been graciously pleased to confer this mark of distinction on me. I may safely say that the recollection of the act for which I was promoted effectually kept down my pride. Neither did the bashfulness of low birth ever forsake me; so that nobility to me was like a hair shirt to a penitent: I determined therefore to lock up the evidences of my shame in a private drawer, instead of blazoning them to dazzle the eyes of the foolish and corrupt.

CHAPTER VII

AN ACCIDENTAL MEETING BETWEEN GIL BLAS AND FABRICIO. THEIR LAST CONVERSATION TOGETHER, AND A WORD TO THE WISE FROM NUNEZ

THE poet of the Asturias, as the reader, if he thought of him, may have remarked, was very negligent in his intercourse with me. It was not to be expected, that my employments would leave me time to go and look after him. I had not seen him since the critical discussion touching the Iphigenia of Euripides, when chance threw me across him, as he came out of a printing-house. I accosted him, saying: So! so! Master Nunez, you have got among the printers: this looks as if we were threatened with some new production.

You may indeed prepare yourselves for such an event, answered he: I have a pamphlet just ready for publication which is likely to make some noise in the literary world. There can be no question about its merit, replied I: but I cannot conceive why you waste your time in writing pamphlets: it should seem as if such squibs and rockets were scarcely worth the powder expended in their manufacture.

It is very true, rejoined Fabricio: and I am well aware th none but the most vulgar gazers are caught by such holid fire-works: however, this single one has escaped me, and must own that it is a child of necessity. Hunger, as y know, will bring the wolf out of the forest.

What! exclaimed I, is it the author of the "Count Saldagna" who holds this language? A man with annuity of two thousand crowns? Gently, my friend, inte rupted Nunez: I am no longer a pensioned poet. T affairs of the treasurer Don Bertrand are all at sixes a sevens: he has been at the gaming table, and played with t public money: an extent has issued, and my rent-charge gone posthaste to the devil. That is a sad affair, said I: b may not matters come round again in that quarter? N chance of it, answered he: Signor Gomez del Ribero, plight as destitute as that of his poor bard, is sunk for eve nor can he, as they say, by any possible contrivance be s afloat again.

In that case, my good friend, replied I, we must look o for some post which may make you amends for the loss your annuity. I will ease your conscience on that sco said he: though you should offer me the wealth of the Indi as a salary in one of your offices, I would reject the boo clerkships are no object to a partner in the firm of t Muses; a literary berth, or absolute starvation for yo humble servant! If you must have it plump, I was bo to live and die a poet, and the man whose destiny is hangin will never be drowned.

But do not suppose, continued he, that we are altogeth forlorn and destitute: besides that we accommodate t requisites of independence to our finances, we do not lo far beyond our noses in calculating the average of o fortunes. It is insinuated that we often dine with the mo abstemious orders of the religious; but our sanctity in th particular is too credulously imputed. There is not o of my brother wits, without excepting the calculators almanacs, who has not a plate laid for him at some su stantial table: for my own part, I have the run of two go houses. To the master of one I have dedicated a romanc and he is the first commissioner of taxes who was ev associated with the Muses: the other is a rich tradesm in Madrid, whose lust is to get wits about him; he is n

nice in his choice, and this town furnishes abundance to those who value wit more by quantity than quality.

Then I no longer feel for you, said I to the poet of the Asturias, since you are satisfied in your condition. But be that as it may, I assure you once more, that you have a friend in Gil Blas, however you may slight him: if you want my purse, come and take it: it will not fail you at a pinch; and you must not stand between me and my sincere friendship.

By that burst of sentiment, exclaimed Nunez, I know and thank my friend Santillane: in return, let me give you a salutary caution. While my lord duke is in his meridian, and you are all in all with him, reap, bind, and gather in your harvest: when the sun sets, the gleaners are sent home. I asked Fabricio whether his suspicions were surely founded; and he returned me this answer. My information comes from an old knight of Calatrava, who pokes his nose into secrets of all sorts; his authority passes current at Madrid, much as that of the Pythian newsmongers did through Greece; and thus his oracle was pronounced in my hearing: My lord duke has a host of enemies in battle-array against him; he reckons too securely upon his influence with the king; for his majesty, as the report goes, begins to take in hostile representations with patience. I thanked Nunez for his friendly warning, but without much faith in his prediction: my master's authority seemed rooted in the court, like the tempest-scoffing firmness of an oak in the native soil of the forest.

CHAPTER VIII

GIL BLAS FINDS THAT FABRICIO'S HINT WAS NOT WITHOUT FOUNDATION. THE KING'S JOURNEY TO SARAGOSSA

THE poet of the Asturias was no bad politician. There was a court plot against the duke, with the queen at the bottom; but their plans were too deeply laid to bubble at the surface. During the space of a whole year, my simplicity was insensible to the brewing of the tempest.

The revolt of the Catalans, with France at their back, and the ill success of the war for their suppression, excited the murmurs of the people, and whetted their tongues

against government. A council was held in the roy presence, and the Marquis de Grana, the emperor's ambass dor, was specially requested to assist. The subject debate was whether the king should remain in Castile, or and take the command of his troops in Arragon. T minister spoke first, and gave it as his opinion that h majesty should not quit the seat of government. All t members supported his arguments, with the exception the Marquis de Grana, whose whole heart was with t house of Austria, and the sentiments of his soul on the t of his tongue, after the homely honesty of his nation. H argued so forcibly against the minister, that the king en braced his opinion from conviction, though contrary to t vote of council, and fixed the day when he would set o for the army.

This was the first time that ever the sovereign ha differed from his favourite, and the latter considered it as a inexpiable affront. Just as the minister was withdrawi to his closet, there to bite upon the bridle, he espied m called me in, and told me with much discomposure wh had passed in debate: Yes, Santillane, observed he, t king, who for the last twenty years has spoken only throug my mouth, and seen with my eyes, is now to be wheedl over by Grana; and that on the score of zeal for the hou of Austria, as if that German had a more Austrian soul his body than myself.

Hence it is easy to perceive, continued the minister, th there is a strong party against me, with the queen at t head. Heaven forbid it, said I. Has not the queen f upwards of twelve years been accustomed to your par mount authority, and have you not taught the king t knack of not consulting her? The desire of making a cam paign may for once have enlisted his majesty on the side the Marquis de Grana. Say rather that the king, argue my lord duke, will be surrounded by his principal office when in camp; and then the disaffected will find their oppo tunity for poisoning him against my administration. B they overreach themselves; for I shall completely insula the prince from all their approaches; and so he did, in manner which, for example, deserves not to be passed ove

The day of the king's departure being arrived, t monarch, leaving the queen regent, proceeded for San

gossa by way of Aranjuez; a delightful residence, where he whiled away three weeks. Cuença was the next stage, where the minister detained him still longer by a succession of amusements. A hunting party was contrived at Molina in Arragon, and hence there was no choice of road but to Saragossa. The army was near at hand, and the king was preparing to review it: but his keeper sickened him of the project, by making him believe that he would be taken by the French, who were in force in the neighbourhood; so that he was cowed by a groundless apprehension, and consented to be a prisoner in his own court. The minister, from an affectionate regard to his safety, secluded him from all approach: so that the principal nobility, who had equipped themselves at enormous charges to be about his person, could not even procure an occasional audience. Philip, weary of bad lodgings and worse recreation at Saragossa, and perhaps feeling himself scarcely his own master, soon returned to Madrid. Thus ended the royal campaign, and the care of maintaining the honour of the Spanish colours was left to the Marquis de los Velez, commander-in-chief.

CHAPTER IX

THE REVOLUTION OF PORTUGAL, AND DISGRACE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

A FEW days after the king's return, an alarming report prevailed at Madrid, that the Portuguese, considering the Catalan revolt as an opportunity offered them by fortune for throwing off the Spanish yoke, had taken arms, and chosen the Duke of Braganza for their king, with a full determination of supporting him on the throne. In this they conceived that they did not reckon without their host; because Spain was then embroiled in Germany, Italy, Flanders, and Catalonia. They could not in fact have hit upon a crisis more favourable for their deliverance from so galling a yoke.

It was a strange circumstance, that while both court and city were struck with consternation at the news, my lord duke attempted to joke with the king, and make the Duke of Braganza his butt; Philip, however, far from falling in

with this ill-timed pleasantry, assumed a serious air, of
omen to the minister, who felt his seat to totter under hi
The queen was now his declared enemy, and openly accus
him of having caused the revolt of Portugal by his mi
conduct. The nobility in general, and especially those wh
had been at Saragossa, when they saw a cloud gatheri
about the minister, joined the queen's party:[1] but th
decisive blow was the return of the duchess dowager
Mantua from her government of Portugal to Madrid; f
she proved clearly to the king's conviction that the counse
of his own cabinet produced the revolution.

His majesty, deeply impressed with what he had hear
was now completely recovered from every symptom
partiality towards his favourite. The minister, findi
that his enemies were in possession of the royal ear, wro
for permission to resign his employments, and retire fro
court, since all the political mischances of the time we
ascribed to his personal delinquency. He expected a lett
like this to produce a wonderful effect, reckoning as he di
upon the prince's private friendship, which could scarce
brook a separation: but his majesty's answer undeceive
him, by laconically complying with his ostensible wis
to withdraw.

Such a sentence of banishment in the king's own han
writing came like a thunder-storm in harvest; but thou
destruction to his long-cherished hopes, he affected th
serene look of constancy, and asked me what I would d
in his circumstances. I would drive before the wind, sa
I; renounce the ungrateful court, and pass the remaind
of my days in peace on my own estate. You couns
wisely, replied my master, and I shall set out for Loeche
there to finish my career, after one more interview wit
his majesty: for I could wish just to convince him that
have done what man can do to support the heavy load
state upon my shoulders, and that it was not within th
compass of possibility to prevent the unfortunate even
which are imputed to me as a crime. It were equall
reasonable to charge the pilot with the wrecking fury
the storm, and make him answerable for the uncontrolle

[1] At length his sovereign frowns—the train of state
Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate.
JOHNSON'S IMITATION OF JUVENAL'S TENTH SATIRE

power of the elements. Thus did the minister inwardly flatter himself that he could set things to rights again, and once more fix firm the seat which was shaking under him; but he could not procure an audience, and was even commanded to resign his key of private admission into his majesty's closet.

This last requisition convinced him that there was no hope; and he now made up his mind in earnest for retirement. He looked over his papers, and had the prudence to burn a good number, he then selected a small household for his retreat, and publicly announced his departure for the next day. Apprehending insult from the mob, if the time and manner of his setting out were public, he escaped early in the morning through the kitchens out at the back door, got into a shabby, hired carriage, with his confessor and me, and reached in safety the road leading to Loeches, a village on his own estate, where his countess had founded a magnificent convent of Dominican nuns.

CHAPTER X

A DIFFICULT, BUT SUCCESSFUL, WEANING FROM THE WORLD. THE MINISTER'S EMPLOYMENTS IN HIS RETREAT

MADAME D'OLIVAREZ stayed behind her husband some few days, with the intention of trying what her tears and entreaties might do towards his recall; but in vain did she prostrate herself before their majesties: the king paid not the least attention to her pleadings and remonstrances, though artfully adapted for effect; and the queen, who hated her mortally, took a savage pleasure in her tears. The minister's lady, however, was not easily discouraged: she stooped so low as to solicit their good offices from the ladies of the bed-chamber; but the fruit of all this meanness was only the sad conviction that it excited more contempt than pity. Heart-broken at having degraded herself by supplications so humiliating, and yet so unavailing, she departed to her husband, and mourned with him the loss of a situation, which under a reign like that of Philip the Fourth, was little short of sovereign power.

The accounts her ladyship brought from Madrid were

wormwood to the duke. Your enemies, said she, sobbing with the Duke of Medina Celi at their head, are loud in th king's praises for your removal; and the people triump in your disgrace with an insolent joy, as if the cloud o adversity were to be dispelled by the breath which dis solved your administration. Madam, said my maste follow my example; suppress your discontent: we mus drive before the storm, when we cannot weather it. I di think, indeed, that my favour would only be eclipsed wit the lamp of life: a common illusion of ministers and favou ites, who forget that they breathe but at the good pleasur of their sovereign. Was not the Duke of Lerma as muc mistaken as myself, though fondly relying on his purpl as a pledge for the lasting tenure of his authority?

Thus did my lord duke preach patience to the partne of his cares, while his own bosom heaved under the dire pressure of anxiety. The frequent dispatches from Do Henry, who was staying about the court to pick up infor mation, kept him continually on the fret. Scipio was th messenger; for he was still about the person of that youn nobleman, though I had relinquished my post on his mar riage. Sometimes we heard of changes in the inferio departments of office, solely for the purpose of wreakin vengeance on his creatures, and filling up the vacancie with his enemies. Then Don Lewis de Haro was repre sented as advancing in favour, and likely to be made prim minister. But the most mortifying circumstance of a was the change in the viceroyalty of Naples, which wa taken from his friend, the Duke de Medina de las Torres and bestowed on the High Admiral of Castile, who wa his bitterest enemy. For this there was no other motiv but the pleasure of giving pain to a fallen favourite.

For the first three months, his lordship gave himself up in his solitude a prey to disappointment and regret: bu his confessor, a holy and pious Dominican, supporting hi religious zeal with manly eloquence, succeeded in pourin the balm of consolation into his soul. By continually representing to him, with apostolic energy, that his eterna salvation was now the only object worth his care, h weaned him gradually from the uses of this world. Hi excellency was no longer panting for news from Madrid but learning a new and important lesson, how to die. Ma

dame d'Olivarez too, making a virtue of necessity, sought refuge for herself in the maternal guardianship of her convent, where Providence had reared up, for her edification in faith and good works, a sisterhood of holy maidens, whose spiritual discourses fed her soul, as if with manna in the wilderness. My master's peace within his own bosom advanced, as he withdrew more backward from sublunary things. The employment of his day was thus laid out: almost the whole morning was devoted to religious duties, till dinner-time; and after dinner, for about two hours, he played at different games with me and some of his confidential domestics: he then generally retired alone into his closet till sunset, when he walked round his garden, or rode out into the neighbourhood either with his confessor or me.

One day when I was alone with him, and was particularly struck with his apparent self-complacency, I took the liberty of congratulating his lordship on his complete reconciliation to retirement. Use, however late acquired, is second nature, answered he: for though I have all my life been accustomed to the bustle of business, I assure you that I become every day more and more attached to this calm and peaceful mode of life.

CHAPTER XI

A CHANGE IN HIS LORDSHIP FOR THE WORSE. THE MARVELLOUS CAUSE, AND MELANCHOLY CONSEQUENCES, OF HIS DEJECTION

His excellency sometimes amused himself with gardening, by way of variety. One day as I was watching his progress, he said jokingly: You see, Santillane, a fallen minister can turn gardener at last. Nature will prevail, my lord, answered I. You plant and water something useful at Loeches, while Dionysius of Syracuse whipped school-boys at Corinth. My master was not displeased either with the comparison or the compliment.

We were all delighted at the castle to see our protector, rising above the cloud of adversity, take pleasure in so novel a mode of life: but we soon perceived an alarming

change. He became gloomy, thoughtful, and mela
choly. Our parties at play were all given up, and
efforts could succeed to divert his mind. From dinne
time till evening he never left his closet. We thought t
dreams of vanished greatness had returned to break h
rest; and in this opinion the reverend Dominican gave t
rein to his eloquence; but it could not outstrip the cour
of that hypochondriac malady, which triumphed over a
opposition.

It seemed to me there was some deeper cause, which
behoved a sincere friend to fathom. Taking advantage
our being alone together, My lord, said I, in a tone
mingled respect and affection, whence is it that you a
no longer so cheerful as heretofore? Has your philosoph
lost ground? or has the world recovered its allurements
Surely you would not plunge again into that gulf, whe
your virtue must inevitably be shipwrecked! No, heave
be praised! replied the minister: my part at court has lon
faded from my memory, and its trappings from my eye
Indeed! why then, resumed I, since you have strengt
enough to banish false regrets, are you so weak as
indulge a melancholy which alarms us all? What is th
matter with you, my dear master? continued I, fallin
at his knees: some secret sorrow preys upon you: ca
you hide it from Santillane, whose zeal, discretion, an
fidelity you have so often experienced? Why am I so un
happy as to have lost your confidence?

You still possess it, said his lordship: but I must own,
is reluctantly that I shall reveal the subject of my dis
tress: yet the importunities of such a friend are irre
sistible. To no one else could I impart so singular a con
fidence. Yes, I am the prey of a morbid melancholy whic
eats inwardly into my vitals: a spectre haunts me ever
moment, arrayed in the most terrific form of preternatura
horror. In vain have I argued with myself that it is
vision of the brain, an unreal mockery: its continual pre
sentments blast my sight, and unseat my reason. Thoug
my understanding teaches me, that in looking on thi
spectre I stare at vacancy, my spirits are too weak t
derive comfort from the conviction. Thus much have yo
extorted from me: now judge whether the cause of m
melancholy is fit to be divulged.

With equal grief and astonishment did I listen to the strange confession, which implied a total derangement of the nervous system. This, my lord, said I, must proceed from injudicious abstinence. So I thought at first, answered he; and to try the experiment, I have been eating more than usual for some days past; but it is all to no purpose, the phantom takes his stand as usual. It will vanish, said I, if your excellency will only divert your mind by your accustomed relaxations with your household. Company and gentle occupation are the best remedies for these affections of the spirits.

In a short time after this conversation, his lordship became seriously indisposed, and sent for two notaries from Madrid, to make his will. Three capital physicians followed in their track, who had the reputation of curing their patients now and then. As soon as it was noised about the castle that these last undertakers were arrived, the case was given up for lost; weeping and gnashing of teeth took place universally, and the family mourning was ordered. They brought with them their usual understrappers, an apothecary and a surgeon.[1] The notaries were suffered to earn their fee first, after which death's notaries prepared to take a bond of the patient. They practised in the school of Sangrado, and from their very first consultation, ordered bleeding so frequently and freely, that in six days they brought his lordship to the point of death, and on the seventh delivered him from the terror of his sprite.

After the minister's decease, a lively and sincere sorrow reigned in the castle of Loeches. The whole household wept bitterly. Far from deriving consolation from the certainty of being remembered in his will, there was not a dependent who would not willingly have saved his life by the sacrifice of the legacy. As for me, whom he most delighted in, attached to him as I was from disinterested friendship, my grief was more acute than that of the rest. I question whether Antonia cost me more tears.

[1] Behind him sneaks
Another mortal, not unlike himself,
Of jargon full, with terms obscure o'ercharged,
Apothecary call'd, whose fœtid hands
With power mechanic, and with charms arcane,
Apollo, god of medicine, has endued.—BRAMSTON.

CHAPTER XII

THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE CASTLE OF LOECHES AFTER HI LORDSHIP'S DEATH, AND THE COURSE WHICH SAN TILLANE ADOPTED

THE minister, according to his last injunctions, wa buried without pomp and without procession in the con vent, with a dirge of our lamentations. After the funera Madame d'Olivarez called us together to hear the wil read, with which the household had good reason to be satis fied. Every one had a legacy proportioned to his claim and none less than two thousand crowns: mine was th largest, amounting to ten thousand pistoles, as a mark o his singular regard. The hospitals were not forgotten, an provision was made for an annual commemoration i several convents.

Madame d'Olivarez sent all the household to Madri to receive their legacies from Don Raymond Caporis who had orders to pay them; but I could not be of th party, in consequence of a violent fever from distress o mind, which confined me to the castle for more than a week. During that time, the reverend Dominican paid me all possible attention. He had conceived a friendship for me, which was not confined to my worldly interests and was anxious to know how I meant to dispose of mysel on my recovery. I answered that I had not yet made up my mind upon the subject: there were moments when my feelings strongly prompted towards a religious vow. Pre cious moments! exclaimed the Dominican, you will do well to profit by them. I advise you as a friend to retire to our convent at Madrid, for example; there to become a pious benefactor by the free gift of your whole fortune, and to die in the livery of Saint Dominic. Many very ques tionable Christians have made amends for a life of sin by so holy an end.

In the actual disposition of my mind, this advice was not unpalatable; and I promised to reflect upon it. But on consulting Scipio, who came to see me immediately after the monk, he treated the very notion as the phantom of a distempered brain. For shame! said he; does not your

estate at Lirias offer a more eligible seclusion? If you were delighted with it formerly, the charm will be increased tenfold, now that the lapse of years has moderated your sense of pleasure, and softened down your taste to the simple beauties of nature.

It was no difficult matter to operate a change in my inclinations. My friend, said I, you carry it decidedly against the advocate of Saint Dominic. We will go back to Lirias as soon as I am well enough to travel. This happened shortly; for as the fever subsided, I soon felt myself sufficiently strong to put my design in execution. We went first to Madrid. The sight of that city gave me far other sensations than heretofore. As I knew that almost its whole population held in horror the memory of a minister, of whom I cherished the most affectionate remembrance, I could not feel at my ease within its precincts. My stay was therefore limited to five or six days, while Scipio was making the necessary arrangements for our rustication. In the mean time, I waited on Caporis, and received my legacy in ready money. I likewise made my arrangements with the receivers for the regular remittance of my pensions, and settled all my affairs in due order.

The evening before our departure, I asked the son of Coselina whether he had received his farewell from Don Henry. Yes, answered he, we took leave of each other this morning with mutual civility; he went so far as to express his regret that I should quit him; but however well satisfied he might be with me, I am by no means so with him. Mutual content is like a river, which must have its banks on either side. Besides, Don Henry makes but a pitiful figure at court now; he has fallen into utter contempt; people point at him with their finger in the streets, and call him a Genoese bastard. Judge, then, for yourself, whether it is consistent with my character to keep up the connection.

We left Madrid one morning at sunrise, and went for Cuença. The following was the order of our equipment; we two in a chaise and pair, three mules, laden with baggage and money, led by two grooms and two stout footmen, well armed, in the rear; the grooms wore sabres, and the postilion had a pair of pistols in his holsters. As we were seven men in all, and six of us determined fellows, I took

the road gaily, without trembling for my legacy. In th villages through which we passed our mules chimed thei bells merrily, and the peasants ran to their doors to se us pass, supposing it to be at least the parade of some noble man going to take possession of some viceroyalty.

CHAPTER XIII

THE RETURN OF GIL BLAS TO HIS SEAT. HIS JOY AT FINDIN HIS GOD-DAUGHTER SERAPHINA MARRIAGEABLE; AN HIS OWN SECOND VENTURE IN THE LOTTERY OF LOVE

We were a fortnight on our journey to Lirias, having n occasion to make rapid stages. The sight of my own do main brought melancholy thoughts into my mind, with th image of my lost Antonia; but better topics of reflectio came to my aid, with a full purpose to look at things on th brighter side, and the lapse of two-and-twenty years, whic had gradually impaired the force of tender regret.

As soon as I entered the castle, Beatrice and her daughte greeted me most cordially, while the family scene was inter esting in the extreme. When their mutual transport were over, I looked earnestly at my god-daughter, saying Can this be the Seraphina whom I left in her cradle? hov tall and pretty! we must make a good match for her. What my dear god-father, cried my little girl with an enchantin blush, you have but just seen me, and do you want to ge rid of me at once! No, my lovely child, replied I, we hop not to lose you by marriage, but to find a husband for yo in the neighbourhood.

There is one ready to your hands, said Beatrice. Sera phina made a conquest one day at mass. Her suitor ha declared his passion, and asked my consent. I told hi that his acceptance depended on her father and her god father; and here you are to determine for yourselves.

What is the character of this village lordling? sai Scipio. Is he not, like his fellows, the little tyrant of th soil, and insolent to those who have no pedigree to boast The furthest from it in the world, answered Beatrice; th young man is gentle in his temper and polished in hi manners; handsome withal, and somewhat under thirty

ou paint him in flattering colours, said I to Beatrice; hat is his name? Don Juan de Jutella, replied Scipio's life: it is not long since he came to his inheritance: he lives n his own estate, about a mile off, with a younger sister, whom he takes care. I once knew something of his mily, observed I; it is one of the best in Valencia. I care ss for lineage, cried Scipio, than for the qualities of the art and mind; this Don Juan will exactly suit us, if he is a ood sort of man. He is belied else, said Seraphina, ith a blushing interest in our conversation; the inhabit-nts of Lirais, who know him well, say all the good of him ou can conceive. I smiled at this; and her father, not ss quick-sighted, saw plainly that her heart had a share in ne testimony of her tongue.

The gentleman soon heard of our arrival, and paid his espects to us within two days. His address was pleasing nd manly, so as to prepossess us in his favour. He ffected merely to welcome us home as a neighbour. Our eception was such as not to discourage the repetition of his isit; but not a word of Seraphina! When he was gone, eatrice asked us how we liked him. We could have no bjection to make, and gave it as our opinion that Sera-hina could not dispose of herself better.

The next day, Scipio and I returned the visit. We took guide, and luckily; for otherwise it might have puzzled s to find the place. It was not till our actual arrival that was visible; for the mansion was situated at the foot of a ountain, in the middle of a wood, whose lofty trees hid from our view. There was an antique and ruinous ap-earance about it, which spoke more for the descent than ne wealth of its proprietor. On our entrance, however, ne elegance of the interior arrangements made amends or the dilapidated grandeur of the outer walls.

Don Juan received us in a handsome room, where he troduced his sister Dorothea, a lady between nineteen nd twenty years of age. She was a good deal tricked out, s if she had primed and loaded herself for conquest, in ex-ectation of our visit. Thus presenting all her charms in ull force, she did by me much as Antonia had done before; ut I managed my raptures so discreetly, that even Scipio ad no suspicion. Our conversation turned, as on the receding day, on the mutual pleasure of good neighbour-

hood. Still he did not open on the subject of Seraphin nor did we attempt to draw him out. During our intervie I often cast a side glance at Dorothea, though with all t reserve of delicate apprehension; whenever our eyes met, t citadel of my heart was ready to surrender. To descri the object of my love justly, as well as feelingly, her beau was not of the most perfect kind: her skin was of a dazzli whiteness, and her lips united the colour with the fragran of the rose; but her features were not so regular and we proportioned as might have been wished: yet, altogeth she won my heart.

In short, I left the mansion of Jutella a different m from what I was on entering it: so that, returning to Lir with my whole soul absorbed in Dorothea, I saw and spo only of her. How is this, master? said Scipio with a lo of astonishment: you seem to be very much taken wi Don Juan's sister! Can you be in love with her? Ye my friend, answered I: to my shame be it spoken. Sin the death of Antonia, how many lovely females ha passed in review before me with indifference: and must m passions be irresistibly kindled at this time of life? Indee sir, replied the son of Coselina, you may bless your sta instead of squabbling with yourself: you are not so old as make your sacrifice at the shrine of love a by-word; a time has not yet ploughed such furrows on your brow, as render hopeless the desire of pleasing. When you see D Juan next, ask him boldly for his sister: he cannot refu her to you; and besides, if his views in her settlement a ambitious, how can he do better? You have a patent nobility in your pocket, and upon that your posterity ma ride easy; after five generations, when pedigree herself sh be lost in the confusion of her materials, it may exerci the diligence of learned inquiry, to trace the family of t Santillanes to the beginning of its archives, and consecra the fame of its founder by the indistinctness of his story.

CHAPTER XIV

DOUBLE MARRIAGE, AND THE CONCLUSION OF THE HISTORY.

By this discourse, Scipio encouraged me to declare myself, without considering how he exposed me to the danger of a refusal. My own resolution was taken with fear and trembling. Though I carried my years well, and might have sunk at least ten, it did not seem unlikely that a young beauty might turn up her nose at the disparity. I determined, however, to bolt the question the first time I saw her brother, who was not without his trepidations on the subject of my god-daughter.

He returned my call the next morning, just as I had done dressing. Signor de Santillane, said he, I wish to speak with you on some serious business. I took him into my closet, where entering on the subject at once, I imagine, continued he, that you are not unacquainted with the purpose of my visit: I love Seraphina; you are all in all with her father; I must request you therefore to intercede and procure for me the accomplishment of my heart's desire: then shall I have to thank you for the prime bliss of my existence. Signor Don Juan, answered I, as you come to the point at once, you can have no objection to my following your example: My good offices are fully at your service, and I shall hope for yours with your sister in return.

Don Juan was agreeably surprised. Can it be possibl exclaimed he, that Dorothea should have made a conquest of your heart since yesterday? It is even so, said I, and would make me the happiest of men, if the proposal should meet with your joint approbation. You may rely on that, replied he; though with some pretensions to family pride, yours is not an alliance to be despised. You flatter me highly, rejoined I; that you are not mealy-mouthed about receiving a commoner into your pedigree, is a mark of good sense; but even if nobility had been a necessary ingredient in your sister's requisites for a husband, we should not have quarrelled on that account. I have worked out twenty years in the trammels of office; and the

king, as a reward of my long labours, has granted me patent of nobility. This high-minded gentleman read n credentials over with extreme satisfaction, and returni them, told me that Dorothea was mine. And Seraphi yours, exclaimed I.

Thus were the two marriages agreed on between us. T consent of the intended brides was all that remaine for we neither of us presumed to control the inclinations our wards. My friend therefore carried home my propo to his sister, and I called Scipio, Beatrice, and my go daughter together, for the purpose of laying open a simil project. Beatrice voted loudly for immediate acceptanc and Seraphina silently. The father did not say mu against it; but boggled a little at the fortune he must gi to a gentleman whose seat required such immediate a extensive repairs. I stopped Scipio's mouth by telli him that was my concern, and that I should contribu four thousand pistoles to the architect's estimate.

In the evening, Don Juan came again. Your business going swimmingly, said I; pray heaven mine may prom as fairly. Better it cannot, answered he; my influence w quite unnecessary to prevail with Dorothea; your pers had made its impression, and your manners pleased h You were afraid she might not like you; while she, with mo reason, having nothing to offer you but her heart and ha . . . . What would she offer more? interrupted I, out of m wits with joy. Since the lovely Dorothea can think of m without repugnance, I ask no more: my fortune is ampl and the possession of her is the only dowry I should value.

Don Juan and myself, highly delighted at having broug our views to bear so soon, were for hastening our nuptia and cutting off all superfluous ceremonies. I closeted t gentleman with Seraphina's parents; the settlements we soon agreed on, and he took his leave, promising to retu next day with Dorothea. My eager desire of appearin agreeable in that lady's eyes, occasioned me to spend thr hours at least in adjusting my dress, and communicating t air of a lover to my person; but I could not do it so much my mind as in my younger days. The preparations f courtship are a pleasure to a young man, but a seriou business and a hazardous speculation to one who is begi ning to be oldish. And yet it turned out better than n

opes or deserts; for Don Juan's sister received me so raciously, as to put me in good humour with myself. was charmed with the turn of her mind; and foreboded hat with discreet management and much deference, I might eally get her to like me as well as anybody else. Full of his sweet hope I sent for the lawyers to draw up the two ontracts, and for the clergyman of Paterna, to bring us etter acquainted with our mistresses.

Thus did I light the torch of Hymen for the second time, nd it did not burn blue with the brimstone of repentance. Dorothea, like a virtuous wife, made a pleasure of her duty; n gratitude for the pains I took to anticipate all her wishes, he soon loved me as well as if I had been younger. Don uan and my god-daughter were most enthusiastic in their utual ardour; and what was most unprecedented of all, he two sisters-in-law loved one another sincerely. Don uan was a man in whom all good qualities met: my steem for him increased daily, and he did not repay it with gratitude. In short, we were a happy and united family: e could scarcely bear the interval of separation between vening and morning. Our time was divided between irias and Jutella: his excellency's pistoles made the old attlements to raise their heads again, and the castle to esume its lordly port.

For these three years, reader, I have led a life of unmixed liss in this beloved society. To perfect my satisfaction, eaven has deigned to send me two smiling babes, whose ducation will be the amusement of my declining years; nd if ever husband might venture to hazard so bold an ypothesis, I devoutly believe myself their father.

THE END.

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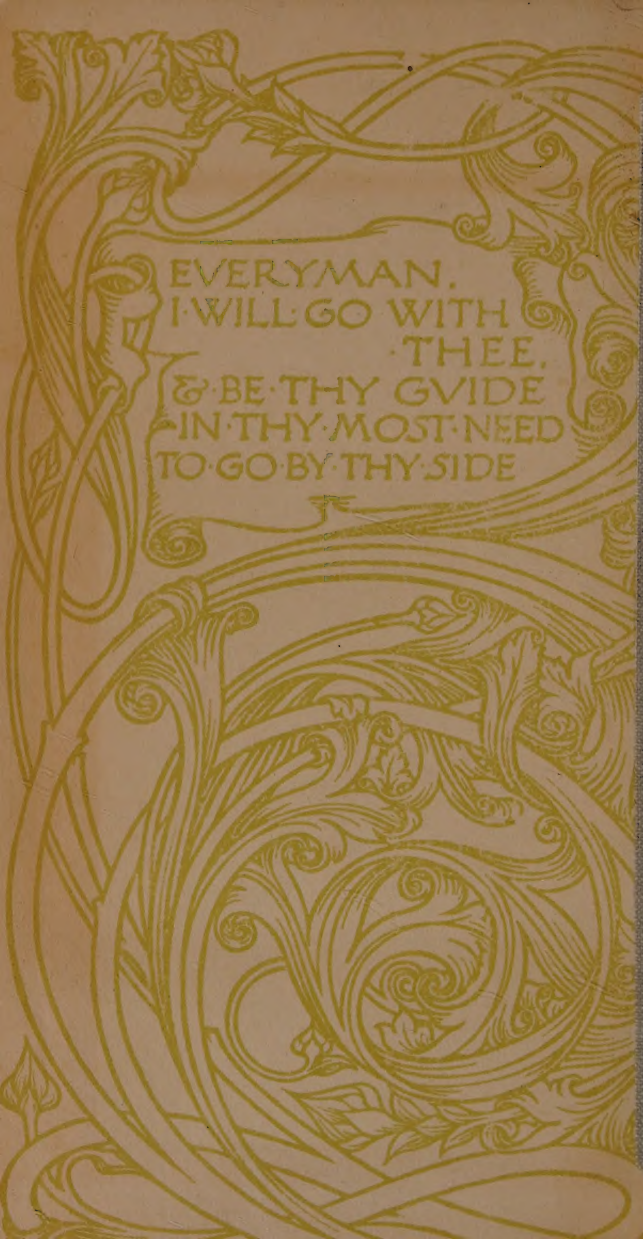
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